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ABSTRACT

This report examines patterns related to academic performance and language development in the lives of 16 children of Mexican descent in grades 3-5 who were identified as learning disabled. Research questions focused on factors that made these students eligible for referral for learning disabilities, patterns in the development of students' oral and literacy skills, and how such factors and patterns impact on their future opportunities for language and literacy development and advanced academic success. Data collection included review of student academic records; interviews with students, parents, teachers, and other staff; and oral reading sessions with each student. Findings do not address whether the students were, in fact, learning disabled. However certain generalizations emerged. All children began school anxious to learn but were overwhelmed as instruction became meaningless due to incomprehensible input. Because students had developed basic English language abilities appropriate for contextualized environments, teachers overestimated their abilities to handle context-reduced texts that rely on previous experiences and higher levels of language proficiency for construction of meaning. Noticing limited progress, teachers suspected disability. Parents were not aware of the demands the curriculum made on their children, nor of the level of linguistic skills necessary to succeed in school. Children's early experiences with reading and language were limited. Homework and much classwork was out of the zone of proximal development of these learners and their parents. Special education interventions were too restrictive to promote change, given these learners' characteristics and needs. Recommendations are offered for policy makers, practitioners, and parents. Contains 85 references and interview questions. (SV)

Multiple Perspectives Analysis of
Second Language Learners of Mexican-descent
Identified as Learning Disabled:
Issues of concern in the development of
their language and literacy

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Final report

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This research project is part of a comparative study conceptualized and directed by Dr. Ji-Mei Chang examining language and literacy development among second language learners, Chinese-American students and Mexican-descent students, in programs serving learning disabled students. It was supported by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services of the United States Department of Education under contract number HO23A10050. The views contained in this report do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the U. S. Department of Education.

Abstract

This report describes a study about patterns in the lives of 16 students of Mexican-descent in grades three, four and five who were receiving services in special education, under the learning disabilities category, to remediate difficulties in learning. The focus of the study were the areas of language and literacy development. It includes a combination of historical and current data in order to trace the students' path as they encountered opportunities to learn but were not able to profit from them as expected. Findings indicated that a combination of factors led to a condition which circumscribed the development of advanced language, cognitive and literacy skills in these students reducing their opportunities to learn and accomplish as expected. It seems to this researcher that their learning opportunities were out of the students' zone of proximal development and overly restricted for second language learners thus rendering less effective the efforts of parents, teachers and specialists.

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Table of Content

Abstract	iii
Acknowledgement.....	iv
Table of Contents	vi
List of Tables	ix
List of Figures	x
 Introduction	 1
A Model for the Contruction of Advanced Linguistic and Literacy Skills:	
Socio-Interactive Transactions	6
Social Interaction as a Basis for Learning	6
Linguistic Proficiency as the Basis for Literacy Development	8
Method.....	12
Community and Schools.....	12
Schools within non-traditional suburban communities.....	13
Characteristics of Students Selected to Participate	14
Factors Leading to, or Supporting, a Theory of Disability Among	
Second Language Learners	30
The Infrastructure of a Disability: Factors Impacting on	
Perception and Performance	31
Not pofiting from instructional placements and modifications	
to instruction as expected	32
Low language proficiency	34
Difficulties sustaining initial gains	35
Other factors related to school impacting on learning	
opportunities and academic performance	37

Factors Relating to the Home Impacting on Learning	
Opportunities and Academic Performance	39
A dichotomous language environment	39
Social networks increase access to language models but the development of intact linguistic systems becomes fragmented	41
Participation in community life promotes learning but not sufficiently to support the demands of academic requirements	44
Limited uses of print in the home	45
The Infrastructure of a Disability: Patterns in Performance	48
Patterns in Measured Language Abilities	49
Retention Patterns	51
Poor Performance	52
Poor Work Habits	55
Group Profiles	56
Third graders	56
Fourth graders	58
Fifth graders	61
Would Intervention Work?: Prognosis for Success	72
Academic Support	73
Instructional programming: Focus of the I. E. P.	73
Literacy in school	76
Home Support: Literacy at Home	78
Macro- and Micro-Community Participation	81
Conclusions	83

Recommendations	87
For Policymakers	87
For Practitioners	90
For Teachers	90
For Evaluators	91
For Parents	92
For Administrators	93
For Researchers	94
References	96
Appendices	104
Appendix A: Home Language and Literacy Environment, Child's Questionnaire	105
Appendix B: Home Language and Literacy Environment, Parents' Questionnaire	114
Appendix C: Teachers' Questionnaires	125
Home Room Teacher Interview	125
Resource Specialist Interview	127
Appendix D: Student School Profile	131

List of Tables

1.	Participation by Grade and Gender	15
2.	Students' Place of Birth	15
3.	Family Constitution	20
4.	Pressures to Perform: Teachers' Comments in Progress Reports, Shift in Perception	37
5.	Partial Profile of Third Grade Second Language Learners of Mexican-Descent Referred and Placed in Special Education	66
6.	Partial Profile of Fourth Grade Second Language Learners of Mexican-Descent Referred and Placed in Special Education	68
7.	Partial Profile of Fifth Grade Second Language Learners of Mexican-Descent Referred and Placed in Special Education	70
8.	Skills and Abilities to be Developed in the RSP Classroom	75

List of Figures

1. Parental Birthplace	18
2. Primary and Secondary Home Support Systems for Homework	43
3. Printed Material Available in Homes.....	38

Diversity rather than uniformity prevails in today's schools. Classrooms contain different instructional levels as well as varying socio-cultural groups. Language abilities range from no familiarity with English to age/grade appropriate English language proficiency. Parental perspectives on what constitutes an appropriate education for their children also vary. Heterogeneous student enrollment poses the greatest challenge to our multicultural and increasingly common multilingual schools. A culturally and linguistically diverse population requires understanding based on multiple perspectives.

Latino/Hispanic¹ students are part of this diversifying student population. Many have learned English as their second language at home and/or in school. Upon school entry, broad diversity also characterizes their linguistic skills in the first language, which is not necessarily Spanish in some cases (e.g., native American languages or dialects spoken in different parts of Mexico) and/or English. Variation is typical also in sociocultural make up. Familiarity with the United States schools system and its expectations ranges from second-hand information shared by other immigrants to second- and third-generation perspectives. Advanced literacy development among this group remains mostly an underdeveloped potential. School desertion among Latino youth testifies to the failure of our school system to develop instructional programs in which the co-construction of knowledge and transformation of lives lead to increased motivation to remain and advance to higher academic levels.

¹ For purposes of this study, and after consultation with parents, Hispanic and Latino will be used interchangeably to indicate those members of an ethnolinguistic group of Spanish and indigenous roots residing in the Americas. Most parents preferred to be referred to as Hispanics indicating membership within a larger family, others preferred the common term Latino, or Chicano, to indicate liberation from the historical subjugation traditional in the United States.

Periodic reviews of instructional programs for Latino students in special education (Cegelka, Lewis & Rodríguez, 1987; Figueroa, 1989; García, 1985; Maldonado-Colón, 1984; Ortiz, et al., 1986; Shepard and Smith, 1981) reveal that a significant proportion of the educators working with these students needs to develop a knowledge-base related to language and literacy development for Latino students whose language skills and culture vary significantly from those of mainstream students. While exposure to conversational English and to academic subjects taught in English might be appropriate, it definitely is not enough to meet the challenge of improved and sustained academic performance, without appropriate and informed mediation (Feuerstein, 1979, 1980), effective educational change and empowerment for culturally and/or linguistically diverse students with disabilities remains dubious. Hence, it is in the best interest of professionals working with second language learners, with or without disabilities, to access information that would enable them to reflect on and evaluate current approaches to promote language and literacy practices² for culturally and/or linguistically diverse students in special education programs.

The primary purpose of this study is to raise issues related to language and literacy development in school and at home by studying linguistic, socio-cultural and academic profiles of students of Mexican-descent enrolled in grades three through five³ in public schools, who are

² Routman's (1988) description of literacy practices guides this study: Genuine literacy implies using reading, writing, thinking, and speaking daily in the real world, with options, appreciation, and meaningful purposes in various settings and with other people" (p. 15)

³ Grade six was ruled out because of the amount of time it would require to review the academic records. In addition, sixth graders who have been failing in coursework are less apt to participate willingly in studies involving interviews about their low reading abilities and unmet challenges.

second language learners⁴ and who had been referred to and served by special education teachers known as resource specialists (RSP teachers) in California.

A review of related literature suggested the need for a combination of quantitative and qualitative data exploring essential aspects of academic achievement related to English literacy development and its correlate, academic language proficiency. In this study, literacy is defined according to Holdaway's (1979) broad definition: The acquisition and development of oral language, reading and writing concepts and skills. Such focus required the investigation of three critical environments: home, school and community; and how each seemed to influence language and literacy acquisition among the learners referred for evaluation and placement in special education programs because of difficulties associated with academic underachievement.

The report will describe, define, compare and contrast patterns in the lives of 16 children⁵ of Mexican-descent identified as learning disabled who developed basic English language abilities appropriate for contextualized environments, but not higher proficiency for advanced literacy development. Three questions guided the inquiry: What factors

⁴ The qualifier of being second language learners was selected rather than a monolingual group because this is the population currently presenting a great challenge to schooling systems.

⁵ A distinction between child and student becomes necessary in this study. It involves differing perceptions between parents and teachers. These perceptions impact on organization of after school events as well as on expectations key forces such as parent and teacher have on student time and effort. To the parents, their child was first a child and then a student. Student time is spent in school. To the teachers, the child was a student whose priorities should focus around issues related to schooling. Part of the time spent at home must be dedicated to schooling, particularly if the student was having difficulties in school. Coleman (1987) considers this perception to be based on earlier models of schooling in which the school was indeed an extension of the home. To express the distinction in the text of this report, when the child is perceived from the home perspective the word child will be utilized; when the child is perceived from the school's perspective the word student will be used. The types of opportunities and approaches to growth and development are at the heart of this philosophical distinction. Such discussion is beyond the scope of this report, nevertheless, the issues impact on the interpretation of its findings.

or combination of factors related to academic performance made these students eligible for referral and placement in a program for learning disabilities? What patterns were evident in the development of the oral and literacy skills of these students? How do such factors and patterns impact on their future opportunities for language and literacy development and advanced academic success? To answer these questions, information was collected from primary and secondary sources.

Findings reaffirm for the researcher that an interpretation of multiple data sources enables evaluators to develop a richer and stronger profile of second language learners with or without learning disabilities, and a better understanding of the conditions that often disempower them. Particularly, since such understanding is critical to subsequent planning for reduction of learning gaps and academic improvement.

This study documents that both parents and professionals overestimate the language abilities of these learners, or underestimate what it takes to operate in an academic learning environment whose instructional delivery is based on an existing disempowering perspective which according to Poplin (1988), visualizes the underachieving learner as dysfunctional (Kirk, 1962), incapable (Bereiter, 1972; Engelmann, Osborn & Engelmann, 1972), inefficient (Deshler & Schumaker, 1986), and in need of repair/remediation. Data collected and analyzed did provide support to Cummins' (1981, 1984) theory that second language learners referred for psychological evaluation and possible placement in special education manage to develop acceptable levels of conversational and basic English but have significant difficulties with context-reduced texts which rely on previous experiences, higher levels of language proficiency and specific cultural knowledge to assist with the construction of meaning.

Limitations on advanced language insights (i.e., options in word usage,

access to multiple meaning words) and limited familiarity with complex English syntax reduces the effect of opportunities to process longer oral and written texts, common from second grade on, thus, excluding many second language learners and students with learning disabilities from the learning events in which they are expected to participate. Furthermore, the skills for academic success are neither developed by the home nor the school because, among other things, teachers and parents do not know how to nurture their emergence among this highly diverse group of non-conforming learners (Cummins, 1984a, 1989). Hence, the lack of mediators cognizant of the strategies and knowledge needed to succeed in context-reduced learning environments exacerbates the knowledge gap between native English speakers and Latino students learning academic subject matter through English, often their second or weakest language. Unfortunately, well intentioned parents and teachers lack the understandings that might make a difference for the students. For the Latino students participating in this project, it seems that a combination of factors, including limited access to knowledgeable mediators, and effective learning partnerships lead to the evolution of an academic profile characterized by low performance that in turn impacted on their opportunities to develop advanced language and literacy skills. Factors related to the home environment combined with limited understanding of the needs of second language learners in schools, plus limited access to opportunities within the community facilitated the referral to and placement of these students in special education programs.

Analysis of parental interviews, academic records, student interviews, reading materials and some instructional observations strongly suggest the possibility that these students were and continue to be instructed out of their **zone of proximal development** [emphasis added]

(Vygotsky, 1978). Being instructed out of the zone is being deprived of the optimal learning opportunity to advance personal levels of understanding and competence. Being out of the zone disempowers. Consequently, teachers and parents' expectations do not provide the necessary support and direction to advance the students' potential linguistic and literate abilities and skills.

The following sections include the conceptual framework, methods and procedures, findings and discussion, and finally, recommendations. First will appear the theoretical framework which guided the design, implementation and interpretation of the study.

A Model for the Construction of Advanced Linguistic and Literacy Skills: Socio-Interactive Transactions

Social Interaction as a Basis for Learning

Advanced learning requires more than the individual experience: it definitely profits from meaningful interaction and mediation (Coleman, 1987; Rogoff, 1990; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; Vygotsky, 1978) within a context that facilitates development (Poplin, 1988) and provides opportunities to discover and question (Piaget, 1929). Throughout the developmental stages, the type and quality of interaction in which the child is involved are crucial to intellectual and linguistic advancement. Actually, it is through myriads of interactions that the learner has the opportunity to co-construct and re-construct his/her perception of reality, language competence, and literacy knowledge to transform his/her potential to learn and to attain empowerment.

Vygotsky (1978) proposed a model of learning which is rooted in social interaction and mediation. To him, individual consciousness initially was developed externally through joint construction as child and expert shared in the same activity. Appropriate interactive conditions,

such as personal interest, desire to learn and a meaningful challenge, promoted the enhancement of knowledge and thought, through language use and the guidance of someone possessing greater abilities than the one attempting the task. For example, a parent with higher competence guiding a child through the reading of a book. For the learner to benefit from the learning opportunity, the activity has to be within **the zone of proximal development** (Vygotsky, 1978); a level in the learning process at which an individual is ready to profit from a learning opportunity if guided by another who has already developed greater insights and knowledge related to the task or problem. The role of the mediator, or knowledgeable other, is crucial in shaping the experience and guiding the learner. This person will make the difference between, "I can do it !" and "I don't want to do that !" The examples selected, questions posed and responses given not only provide encouragement, but promote active involvement. Such practices demonstrate the principle of social interdependence in cognitive and literacy development which is crucial in the Vygotskian model: Those who are negotiating meaning are highly dependent on the ones who have developed greater abilities and understandings related to the problem or challenge under consideration: Networks of learners and mediators to promote knowledge and advancement.

Coleman (1987) refers to a similar kind of interactive support as **social capital**. He described this notion as people in children's lives who helped them develop "attitudes, effort and conceptions of self, ... [by providing] attention, personal interest and intensity of involvement, some persistence and continuity over time, and a certain degree of intimacy" (p. 36). These sources were social mediators who stimulated the child to reflect on the learning opportunities provided by the school. Social capital

can be found at home, in the neighborhood, in the school or in the community. In today's world, it would have to be actively sought by some children since conditions such as urban decay and upper class flight dwindle social capital, and mobility and distrust increase among those staying behind in certain neighborhoods. This is the plight of numerous minority children: The search for social capital that supports and enhances the ontogeny of learning is becoming a challenge as human resources available to children continue to disappear and social barriers continue to be erected in the sociocultural environments in which these students live. Facilitators or mentors are needed to assist the learner to focus on the learning process, to foster the acquisition of advanced literacy skills and to model reflection (Coleman, 1987; Freire, 1979; Rogoff, 1990; and Vygotsky, 1978). In addition, a restructuring of the schools that serves these children is overdue (Allington, 1994). Cummins (1984) proposes that, in the case of language learning, sensitive and knowledgeable language mentors should be engaged to provide the appropriate modeling of language structures and functions, as well as insights into the meaning and use of the target language, thereby facilitating the interrelating of the two languages and cultures in the process. Likewise, Holdaway (1979) advocates similar mediation for meaningful literacy development.

Linguistic Proficiency as the Basis for Literacy Development

A consensus⁶ exists about the limited understanding possessed by numerous professionals who work with second language learners concerning the nature of the process of second language acquisition, the

⁶ See the work of Cummins (1981), Duran (1989), Figueroa (1989), Garcia (1984), Maldonado-Colon (1984), Mercer and Rueda (in press), Ortiz (1981), Ortiz and Garcia (1986), Ortiz and Maldonado-Colon (1985).

challenges, patterns and kind of support necessary to develop advanced language proficiency for advanced literacy. Through more than a decade, the work of Cummins (1979, 1980, 1981, 1984, 1989, 1990) has brought to professional attention the plight of second language learners, especially those of minority groups residing in environments that do not facilitate the construction and re-construction of literacy knowledge through meaningful experiences as suggested by Vygotsky (1979) and needed by the learners (Wells, 1986). Cummins proposed that several variables influence the performance of culturally and linguistically diverse students in our schools, among which are: (1) the students' language proficiency, (2) the level of language development, (3) the time it takes to develop academic language proficiency, (4) level of acculturation, and (5) the impact of the above factors on the acquisition of literacy and enhancement of academic performance.

According to Cummins (1981), language proficiency is more than an ability to communicate socially at interpersonal levels. It involves the application of linguistic knowledge and intuition, developed through experiences in meaningful contexts, to higher order thinking skills such as generalization, analysis, synthesis and abstraction. To distinguish between these two dimensions which can and do affect academic performance, Cummins (1980) utilized the analogy of an iceberg. Like it, in language there is a contextualized, perceivable, more concrete dimension which can be readily noticed by those involved in the exchange. This perceptible dimension, or Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS), relies on a visible highly interactive context and is usually supported by other aspects of language such as non-verbal and paralinguistic cues. Like the submerged part of the iceberg, there is another aspect of language that is not readily perceived, rather, it is

hidden within itself, context-reduced in comparison with BICS. It is the abstract dimension for formal conceptualization, abstraction, higher order cognitive processing, advanced reading, writing and oral expression: Cummins (1980) named it, Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). Examples would be, the language of the textbooks, short stories, novels and advanced poetic forms; the language of oral discussion and explanations in classes where no visual referents are used; the language of word problems in mathematics: The message is encoded in complex syntactical constructions. In studies reported by Cummins (1981,1984), instructors who do not understand these two dimensions as well as the time and conditions it requires to develop them, refer second language learners for psychological evaluation believing that a disability exists in the learner which prevents him/her from achieving higher levels of academic performance, mainly in the development of literacy skills and abilities, in spite of his/her progression in the acquisition of English language skills.

Evidence from several longitudinal studies (Collier, 1989a, 1989b; Cummins, 1984; Ramirez,1992) reveals that it takes more than three or four years for average second language learners to develop CALP under supportive conditions. Thus, prescribed time, an essential element in schooling, is a variable that according to the above studies can negatively affect second language acquisition and their academic performance. Ramirez (1992) found that gradual and qualitative exposure to English over time did make a difference in the level of literacy competence, as measured by standardized tests.

Wells studied the development of literacy knowledge and skills in young children. He concluded that, a broad and plentiful base in listening to stories along with the engagement in meaningful conversations of

knowledgeable mediators within the home environment facilitated later academic success for the children. They were given the opportunity to hear, discuss, observe mediation, and co-construct knowledge. The use of language in the process provided modeling of language use for specific areas transferable to the school environment. Where such modeling was absent, the challenges posed by schooling became greater. In addition to opportunities for socio-academic and sociolinguistic interactions, other factors can impact on development.

Currently, researchers have identified clusters of factors which seem to affect school success. In studies involving second language learners referred to special education programs because of suspected learning disabilities, patterns of performance, particularly in skills related to literacy development (eg., reading, writing and speaking) suggest the need to examine language proficiency, language dominance for instructional purposes, and language use within the home and immediate community (See the work of Ortiz and her colleagues at The University of Texas at Austin, and the literature they have produced from the HMRI project). Another cluster of factors includes the type and amount of home and school support, for example, expectations held by teachers and parents concerning literacy, instructional opportunities, and improvements to learning opportunities (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Harry, 1992; Goldenberg, Reese & Gallimore, 1992; Heath & Thomas, 1984). A third cluster involves curricula and relevant literacy experiences. Clusters of these variables seem to affect negatively the performance of minority students who are referred for special education evaluation (Cummins, 1989; Mercer, 1986). This study looked into their existence and interplay. The following section describes method, participants and their environments and strategies for data collection and analysis.

Method

This study investigated the reasons for referral to special education, patterns of performance in school and at home, also opportunities for the development of complex language skills and advanced literacy in school and at home, school and home expectations as well as home and school language usage, in order to determine the role of these factors in stimulating or limiting the learning potential of the students of Mexican-descent participating in the study who were identified as learning disabled by school personnel.

Descriptive and ethnographic techniques were used to develop the individual and group profiles that served as the basis for analysis, interpretation and later development of the recommendations within this report. Data collected had to enable triangulation as well as the development of type cases for future intra- and inter-cultural analysis.

Community and schools

The Hispanic/Latino phase of the cross-cultural study was conducted in the Santa Clara county area of California. It involved two of the largest school districts in the area. These communities are nestled in Silicon Valley: Ironically, even though the name evokes an image of affluence, amidst such affluence lives a Hispanic population which ranges in economic status from a few affluent families to a huge economically limited group of mixed Latino origins. Families of Mexican descent form the largest group of Latinos in this area. Most of their children attend public schools in their neighborhoods regardless of desegregation efforts to integrate those schools. The neighborhoods reflect "the special character of an ethnically distinct community" described by Moll and Diaz (1987, p. 200): character is attained by the names and characteristics of the shops established in their periphery which cater to Hispanic preferences.

Other cultural groups in or nearby the areas targeted by this study were Black Americans, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Portuguese, Anglos and other Pacific Rim cultural groups represented in very small percentages in the schools.

The residential areas within the three different neighborhoods in which the participating students resided included single- and multiple-family homes, duplexes, and small and large apartment complexes. Two sets of schools share the same neighborhood being just a couple of miles away from each other. But, all neighborhoods shared the same characteristics in relation to housing and business distribution. Four of the schools were in neighborhoods considered risky for young children: They were beleaguered by drug dealing and increasing youth gang rivalries.

Schools within non-traditional suburban communities. Five elementary schools were selected to participate in this study because of their student population as well as their willingness to participate, and the availability of bilingual programs within their instructional options. All the schools had a large Latino/Hispanic population. All were nested in what Moll and Diaz (1987, p. 200) named "suburban barrios", or communities where the ethnic characteristics are identified by the types of products, services and linguistic exchanges typical of specific ethnolinguistic groups. In the schools, Latino representation ranged from 37-50% of the total population varying from campus to campus (Santa Clara County Office of Education, 1988). The neighborhoods surrounding four of the schools were populated by low income tenants reflecting a mixture of rundown and fairly well-kept houses and apartments. Most of the streets surrounding the schools and branching into the neighborhoods were devoid of the traditional image of children playing on the streets.

Parents confirmed this ascribing it to the lack of safety in their neighborhoods, the presence and distrust of strangers, unsafe traffic patterns, and the lack of time to supervise the children while they played outside. In four of the schools, the park was the playground where some of the children went to play under the supervision of some elder relative or older sibling.

The majority of the school personnel in all of the schools is of a group other than Hispanic, even those providing bilingual services to students requiring some instruction through Spanish. This county like others across the state of California, is affected by the limited number of Hispanic models within the teaching and instruction-related fields. All the resource specialists (RSP teachers) participating in this study were of groups other than Hispanic. One was bilingual in Spanish and English, two had Hispanic bilingual aides.

Characteristics of Students Selected To Participate

Learning disabled students of Mexican-descent were the focus of this study because they constitute the largest number among second language learners being served in special and regular education programs; additionally, they are overrepresented in the category of learning disabilities (Maheady, Towne, Algozzine, Mercer & Ysseldyke, 1983; Ortiz & Yates, 1983; Shepard & Smith, 1981). Sixteen students, nineteen parents, seven resource teachers and eleven classroom teachers participated. Students participating had to be:

- of Mexican ancestry,
- who learned, or were learning English as their second or concurrent (along with Spanish) language,
- enrolled in the public schools in a large metropolitan school district,

- in grades 3-5,
- identified by local procedures as learning disabled.

Sixteen Hispanic elementary students of Mexican-descent who were simultaneous⁷ bilinguals, or second language learners, and in whose homes Spanish was the other language spoken participated in the study. Eight male and eight female students accepted to participate. Table 1 presents the distribution by grade.

Table 1.

Participation by Grade and Gender.

Grade	3	4	5
Males	2	4	2
Females	1	3	4
Total	3	7	6

Students were either born in the United States or in Mexico. Table 2 lists place of birth and distribution. While 81% were born in California, the remaining 19% were born in Mexico.

Table 2.

Students' Place of Birth.

Place of birth	United States	Mexico
Males	7	1
Females	6	2
Total	13	3

⁷ Simultaneous language learners means that the children were acquiring and developing both English and Spanish within the same early years. McLoughlin (1984) considers qualifying period for such category to be between birth and three years.

All of the students were members of families affected by economic limitations forcing one or both parents to work on hard labor jobs such as unstable day-to-day temporary janitorial, health care, construction and farming occupations. Those on day-to-day employment, were reported on school records as unemployed since the lack of guarantee inherent in this situation does not allow the worker to identify the employer or the place of employment which vary by day, month or season. All of the students in this study qualified for some kind of aid, such as free lunches, to supplement what their parents had difficulty providing given their unstable economic circumstances. Also, students were receiving or had received Chapter 1 services through supplementary instruction in reading and/or mathematics.

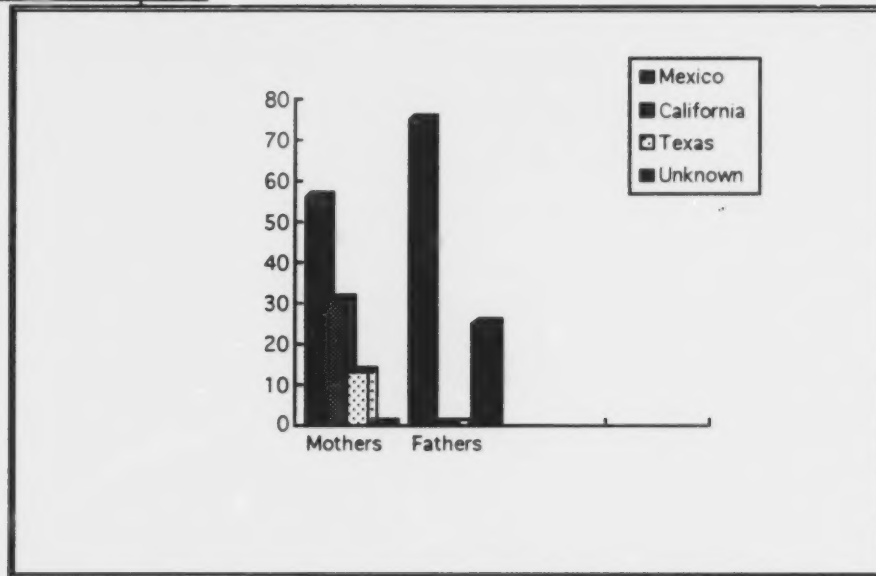
Home Profiles

Family universe. Diversity characterizes the composition, lifestyles, literacy and educational support, and the academic development of this population. The following factors represent some of the areas of greater diversity, but by no means the only ones. The reader will observe that within heterogeneity homogeneity co-exists, thus, patterns of similarities and differences are presented within each subsection.

Parental background. Traditionally, the Hispanic family has been characterized as the rock which protects and offers shelter from storms. Yet in the United States it has suffered a transformation being forced to sever its traditional support networks due to patterns of immigration as well as employment, or unemployment. In this study, one or both parents were either born in Mexico or in the United States (U. S. A.). Parents born in Mexico had their family networks back there. Parents born in the U. S. A. had their stronger family networks back where they grew up which could be other areas of San Jose, Los Angeles, or Texas. Mothers

commented: *Mi familia está allá. Estamos solos aquí.* (My family is over there. We are alone here). Since 56% of the mothers and 75% of the fathers were born and raised in Mexico, entering the U. S. A. later in their lives, their primary language was Spanish. This facilitated the maintenance of Spanish, and often meant the use of English at least at the contextualized, or just basic interpersonal communication level (Cummins' B.I.C.S., 1984). Of the remaining parents, 46% of the mothers were born in the U.S.A. (See Figure 1), and 25% of the fathers did not report birthplace since this was optional. In the homes of U.S.A.-born mothers, English was the preferred language of communication, and Spanish use was determined by the presence of the husband who was a native Spanish speaker. Their wives, on the contrary, were raised or born in the United States, in homes where English, not Spanish was the only acceptable option for schooling and home support, a reflection of the influence of the prevailing philosophical perspective of the times. The great pressures of acculturation that immigrants undergo, specially at the time when these mothers were growing up, affected not only their choice and use of language, but their preference for the language of instruction for their children, and the lack of sharing in the home of the Mexican customs and the transmission of Mexican culture. Additional exposure to Spanish for the child was provided through continuous interaction with relatives living in, or arriving from Mexico, or by interacting with Spanish speaking friends who did not have proficiency in English to communicate comfortably at the contextualized level.

Figure 1.

Parental Birthplace.

The academic instructional level of all parents was below tenth grade. Most dropped out of school for reasons related to economic survival. One went back to improve her mathematics because it was required in her job. These conditions constitute a challenge in the provision of academic support for their children as is discussed later in the section related to homework.

Family size. The size of the Hispanic family varies as a factor of networks of kinship, friendship and migration or mobility. In this study, the size of the smallest family was three members. The largest family had nine members living in the same household. The mean ($\bar{x}$) for family size was 5.6 members. Regardless of socio-economic pressures, the majority (87.5%) of families in this study were intact families as declared by children and verified by the parents' interviews. Twelve of the sixteen families (75%) had both mother and father living at home, two were a

mother and step-father combination, and the remaining two were headed by a single mother supported by her mother as the main caretaker for the child, thus becoming a two-adult supportive unit. Grandmothers played a significant role in childrearing in six of the other homes by taking care of the children after they finished school, or during the weekend. In one of the homes an aunt, a couple of years older than the student, became part of the academic support team since she was in the same school as the participating student. Family human resources within one household are depicted on Table 3. It shows family constitution by family size.

Even though the table shows general family composition, it does not portray variations across families. Fourteen families were considered intact, although in two of those households it was a stepfather, not the father that was taking care of the family. Two of the sixteen families were single parent homes. Many households included more than one family pooling resources and space in order to survive in an area with a very high cost of living as reported by parents, children and support service personnel interviewed by the researcher. Only in one case was the other family included in family count because of the special relationship children felt for the members of the other group.

The families in this study were mostly intact, caring and concerned about the education of their children. While there was variation in family configurations and educational levels, their regard for the opportunity to learn in school was similar: They wanted their children to learn and do well. The section following Table 3 refers to the instrumentation employed to gather data for the information and insights shared in this report.

Table 3.

Family Constitution.

Members	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
mother	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
father	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
sister(s)		X	X	X	X	X	X
brother(s)			X	X	X	X	X
aunt(s)				X			
friend(s)					X		
stepfather					X		
student	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Instrumentation

Six instruments were developed and/or modified by the researchers involved in the larger cross-cultural study during the pilot phase. The content of the instrumentation is grounded on initial observations and interviews conducted by Maldonado-Colón for Latinos and Chang for Chinese. The six instruments included child and parent questionnaires on socio-cultural and academic habits; regular education and resource teacher questionnaires on academic-related practices and concerns; a school records transfer form, and a reading interview form.

Student and parent questionnaires. These questionnaires (See Appendices A and B) addressed five areas through structured and open-ended questions: literacy-related activities in the home as well as out of the home and in the community, home language usage, support networks, and relationships with school. For this study, the 32 items were written in English and in Spanish so that the interviewer could use the language

preferred by the participants. The questions were very similar for parents and children to enable cross-validation of information provided by them.

Student reading interview. The Reading Interview developed by Watson and Burke (1987) was modified to fit the needs of this study. The instrument included twelve items related to the child's perceptions of learning to read, the reading process, and his/her preferred books.

Teachers' interviews. Two instruments were developed for teachers (See Appendix C). One was intended for the Resource Room Teacher and the other for the Homeroom Teacher. There were eleven questions for the Resource Teacher and fifteen for the Homeroom Teacher adding depth to the answers provided by the Child and Parents' Questionnaires.

Student school profile. This instrument was designed to gather data available in the cumulative record(s) (open to all) and the special education records accessed by special permission from the parents. It yielded demographical, linguistic, academic, assessment and behavioral data that provided the researcher an additional vantage point from which to study the child. The school record transfer form was also modified during the initial phase to ease data transfer and to capture key information appearing on the records being studied. While basic information did not vary across districts, the manner or order in which it was presented did. Thus, constant accommodations had to be made to standard forms. For example, data on language proficiency and dominance appeared on a standard checklist form in one of the districts, in narrative form in another, and within a chart in the third, hence, a box rather than line items had to be used to capture the information. Transferring data from progress reports was challenging because they

also varied across districts as did the information on kindergarten reports.

Data Collection Procedures

Initially, each district was invited to participate through contacts with administrators involved with special education programs. Once this permission was granted, school principals' and resource teachers (RSP) were approached. Next, possible student participants were identified and invited to participate. Teachers assisted the researcher with introductory and follow up calls. Letters in English and Spanish requesting participation were sent home with the students stating briefly the purposes of the study, and the procedures that would involve students, their parent(s) and the school. Safeguards for anonymity were explained. The letters indicated that the researcher is bilingual and wanted to conduct the interviews in the language parents and students preferred. In spite of these assurances, the requirement of parent participation reduced the small number of options available to almost half of the possible participants. Thus, circumstances beyond the researcher's control reduced the number of possible participants from which to sample. Because of the low numbers qualifying and their limited willingness to participate, the original design to cover two schools was modified to include several schools to obtain the number of participants' desired for a broader perspective.

Strategies. Several data collection strategies were used to gather the information required to satisfy the goals and design of this study. Data sources include the students themselves, their academic records, their teachers and parents.

Techniques used in data collection enabled the study of each child/student from different perspectives: (a) review and analysis of

school records, (b) a series of interviews, and (c) an informal oral reading session. Relevant data were collected using the five instruments mentioned under instrumentation. Review of school records included the study of the cumulative folder as well as the special education program folder. Interviews involved a series of activities aimed at studying the child from three different perspectives: the child/student's, the parent(s) and the school's. Data gathered through this process enabled triangulation. A brief informal oral reading session and follow up interview yielded data on the student's reading abilities and strategies, oral reading comprehension and perceptions related to reading. This material has been saved for future miscue analysis.

Interviewing. Key-informant/respondent interviews (Spindler, 1979) were utilized to generate information used for triangulation. The pilot phase revealed that interviewing strategies needed to vary across the various groups of informants involved in the study: Adaptations had to be made. For example, the interviewer noticed that parents responded differently when questions were embedded in an informal conversation. This observation resulted in freedom from the pre-ordained sequence in which queries were listed in the document. Vice versa, children and teachers were comfortable with a linear presentation since both are familiar with this type of format which also reduces the amount of time required and increases ease of administration.

Several members of the district's staff were interviewed in the course of the study. These informants/repondents included psychologists, resource teachers, monolingual and bilingual teachers, principals, and speech, hearing and language clinicians. A nonstandardized interview approach was used with key informers/respondents: Part of the interviews adhered to a predetermined set of questions and the other part

followed leads provided during the structured interview. Questions posed to them related to what was observed on records, to procedures followed within the district, procedural modifications, and/or their personal feelings about services provided to the participants. (See Appendix C for teacher interview instrument).

Chang and Maldonado-Colón's (1993) nonscheduled standardized parent interview was modified for this particular study to accommodate for different styles; the format provided greater approximation to a natural conversation. All informants/respondents were asked the same questions with flexibility for the researcher to alter their order. Anticipated probes were included after each set of key questions for standardization purposes. Part of the interview required self-reporting, which in spite of existing professional bias (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984), does yield information useful in the interpretation of data obtained from other sources. Actual administration was embedded within an informal chat with the parent(s) while the researcher took time to jot down the answers to the questions listed within the instrument and to comments provided by the informants/respondents. (See Appendix B for the instrument). The conversations yielded additional data which facilitated the understanding of the family's socio-economic conditions, concerns and limitations as well as their patterns of thinking in decision-making related to the children's schooling; comments were recorded in an operations log as field notes.

Most teachers were interviewed by the researcher, those restricted by their schedule demands were given the interview questionnaire to complete when it was more convenient for them to do it. The response rate was 100%. When the questionnaire was administered individually, it was in the form of an informal conversation which usually extended

beyond the boundaries of the instrument as teachers shared information and concerns about the students and families participating in the project. Related information was incorporated through field notes in the operations log.

A scheduled standardized interview (Chang & Maldonado-Colón, 1993) was administered by the researcher to students in their preferred language. This preference was established by asking students at the beginning of the interview if they preferred Spanish, English or both. Only five preferred English and used it throughout the interview, three indicated English proceeding to answer the first five questions in it and then switching to Spanish to complete the interview. All students answered all questions; some of the questions required self-reporting. (See the instrument in Appendix A).

Participant observations were conducted in four resource classrooms by the researcher to provide additional information to be used in the interpretation of data on case studies. Classrooms whose teachers indicating willingness to be observed were included. In such cases, one to two observations were made. (While limited in time, they provided a snapshot which did not differ from multiple classrooms visited by the researcher while implementing concurrent studies and doing in-class modeling of teaching strategies). Physical space constraints limited the number of observations; the lack of space greatly influenced the degree of obtrusiveness caused by the presence of the researcher, hence jeopardizing the naturalness of the instructional situation, possibly influencing behaviors under observation.

School record study. Record study involved the review and analysis of such sources of information as: (1) the cumulative folder annotations which included demographic data, attendance records, statewide

achievement test results (CTBS or SABE or APRENDA), results and protocols of language proficiency measures (LAS or BSM or IDEA); and (2) the special education program folder which included the initial referral summary, report(s) on deliberations and recommendations of the student study team (SST), report of classroom modifications to enhance the learning opportunity for the student, notes to parents, parent permission forms, assessment plan, psychological report, summary of deliberations and recommendations of the IEP team, when applicable, a report from the speech, hearing and language clinician, and the individualized educational programs (IEP) since initial placement. The amount of information available on these records varied across students, teachers and schools: Individual records could be rich or lean across the years in the same school, and across schools as the students moved from one to the other. Factors such as time attending the same school and type of program(s) in which the student was enrolled determined the quality of material available to the researcher.

The right to privacy significantly restricted the work of the researcher. The students who participated in this study are protected by safeguards of anonymity required by PL 94-192. These safeguards are interpreted differently by school districts. While some districts enable photocopying of documents once parents have given permission, others are uncomfortable with this practice thus, denying the researcher the opportunity to photocopy records to expedite the data collection process imposing serious time constraints on the investigator and impacting on the length of the study. As a consequence, the school record transfer form (Chang & Maldonado-Colón, 1993) had to be modified several times to facilitate codifying and transferring relevant data, and to ensure as much

uniformity of information across cases as was possible. (See Appendix D for its final form).

Reading sample. The study of oral reading abilities, strategies and perspectives on reading was based on a story reading/retelling session and a follow up interview. Stories utilized by the Goodmans in their studies were available to the researcher for selection. The reading material presented to the student was chosen on the basis of estimated level of difficulty s/he could handle without affecting significantly reading fluency and comprehension. Thus, the criterion for initial administration and continuation was that the student had to demonstrate more than 70% comprehension and that the reader was handling a challenging text. After the student began reading two paragraphs from the story, reading was stopped and three comprehension questions were asked: two on details and one on interpretation. If the student read with great difficulties in decoding and fluency, and could not answer at least two of the three questions correctly, a lower level story was selected and the process initiated again. If the student did not have difficulties reading with fluency or decoding and could answer all questions with ease, a higher level text was chosen. This directed the researcher, in some cases, to decrease or increase the level of difficulty of the story after the first 50 words were read. Once the appropriate story was identified, beyond the student's level of instruction, the reading session was followed by a retelling session where free retelling was solicited. Immediately following the retelling of the story, a reading interview was conducted by the researcher utilizing a modified version of Goodman, Watson and Burke's (1987) interview questionnaire. Audiotaping included reading, retelling and interview, documenting the student's reading strategies,

habits and preferences . This part of the study will be presented in a future report.

Data analysis

Because of the descriptive and exploratory nature of this study, focusing on a heterogeneous population whose uniqueness challenges researchers, data analysis followed paths established by ethnographers like Goetz & LeCompt (1984) in their analysis of fieldwork. An inquisitive approach enables the researcher to theorize by comparing, contrasting, aggregating and relating data. Such an approach permits the generation of constructs and the discovery of patterns, which is the ultimate goal of this project: patterns in language and literacy development evident in the lives of 16 second language learners of Mexican-descent identified as learning disabled.

Information gleaned from a review of the literature as well as from previous studies (Maldonado-Colón, 1984, 1992) provided suggestions for the formation of initial categories for analysis. Organizing topics included: social capital, language proficiency, orientation to literacy, nature of academic difficulties, academic performance related to literacy events, procedures to assist the learners in overcoming their limitations, and recommendations or practices to improve their learning opportunities. Each category was divided into units to add other dimensions for comparison and contrast, and to identify relationships influencing each and all children. For example, the construct social capital, a category of study, was divided into: models available, types of support provided, and their limitations. A similar pattern of analysis was followed for all the other categories, generating through perception, comparison, contrast, aggregation, organization and identification of relationships, the material presented in the next section of this report.

Even though the process consumed an enormous amount of time, it permitted the researcher to study children and families individually as well as collectively. This parsimonious approach has proven to be fruitful in understanding the nature of the difficulties that learners face. Such analysis resulted in descriptions and identification of the dynamics influencing participants' performance, perceptions, expectations, and attitudes. Finally, triangulation, or cross-validation of data, was facilitated through the development of matrices, charts and tables which captured frequencies, common elements, and divergence. Non-parametric tests and their subsequent analysis are pending on the availability of resources in the near future.

Factors Leading to, or Supporting, a Theory of Disability Among
Second Language Learners

Pressures forged by the educational system, teachers, parents and peers when there is limited understanding of the linguistic abilities necessary for successful academic performance and flexibility impact on the instructional opportunities and achievement of students of Mexican-descent resulting in consideration by teachers of a possible disability, and result in their referral for special education services. All students participating in this study were referred for evaluation, or pre-evaluation and evaluation, because of difficulties related to language and beginning or advanced literacy development.

Factors in the lives of these students which impacted on their limited acquisition of advanced language and literacy skills included:

- low language proficiency,
- difficulties sustaining initial gains,
- not profiting from instructional placements and modifications,
- mobility,
- frustration,
- living in a dichotomous learning environment,
- limitations in their support system,
- an experiential background whose incorporation into the school curriculum is negligible, and
- limited modeling of the uses of print for learning in their homes.

In addition to such broader factors, several patterns in performance emerged through the analysis of reasons for referral, specifically:

- inability to read with comprehension in either English or

Spanish,

- reading below grade level, or not meeting grade level expectations established by the district for reading and language arts,
- difficulties in understanding and incorporating progressively higher levels of grammatical complexity in English,
- difficulties with writing (mechanics and expression) in either language,
- perceptual, processing or behavioral difficulties such as poor attention span, poor memory for vocabulary, difficulties following directions, and difficulties staying on task.

Their teachers felt that the students had been provided opportunities to acquire and develop basic language and literacy skills, yet learning outcomes were small compared to expectations. Under such conditions, it is not uncommon, as documented by Cummins (1984), for teachers to move to referral for identification of possible learning inabilities.

The Infrastructure of a Disability: Factors Impacting on Perception and Performance

Overall, the students in this study were second language learners whose pre-academic experiences did not prepare them to enter the mainstream successfully in order to meet the expectations of their first and following teachers. The majority of the children began with low levels of English language, and in several cases also Spanish, and thereafter did not seem to advance as expected, in the language arts, in spite of inconsistent spurts of success. Their teachers did try instructional modifications which seemed to promote minor but inconsistent successes. Yet as the school years advanced, frustration and pressures on these

students augmented resulting in patterns and behaviors which lead to referrals to special education and teachers' beliefs that they could not learn in regular classroom settings. This major sub-section of the report presents the factors that impacted on perceptions and performance. The second one presents patterns of performance related to language and literacy development.

Not Profitting from Instructional Placements and Modifications to Instruction as Expected

Analysis of the records at time of referral reveal a consistent pattern of limited progress mostly in language arts in general, sometimes in all academic areas suggesting that students were not able to profit from the curriculum under the conditions it was delivered or facilitated in their "regular classrooms". Most of the information for this section was extrapolated from the narratives of the psychologicals and occasional teachers' comments in progress reports.

According to school records, 12 of the 16 students in this study were placed in reading readiness programs appropriate for native speakers of English who brought with them to the classroom a considerable English language base.⁸ Previous discussion documents that the students had a weak base when they entered kindergarten. Of the 14, 12 came from homes where Spanish was the only language spoken; another 8 had parents who spoke English and Spanish alternatively in family-oriented communication, and in most cases where it happened, English was not the strongest language of the adult models as shared by the parents during

⁸ The experience of a native speaker of English is four or five years of consistent and expanded exposure and use of English. Careful analysis of the structure and content of reading readiness programs used in public schools reveals that to be successful in the potential gains promised by the developers of such programs, students would have to have a fairly high age/grade language level of proficiency.

their interviews. Only two of the 16 students had mothers who considered themselves stronger in English than Spanish and these students also encountered difficulties later on for the same reason: low language skills.

A review of records seeking to identify effective and ineffective strategies and/or modifications revealed very little. Hence, most of the information that follows in this section has to be considered cautiously by the reader since it was teased from teachers' and psychologists' comments and filtered through the years of experience the researcher has accumulated as a teacher of young children in monolingual and bilingual programs. With that in mind, the following are modifications and strategies teachers tried in order to assist these low achieving learners succeed in their classrooms:

- encouragement to participate in discussions and instruction by repeating questions and directions to them several times, also, by providing them opportunities to practice (additional worksheets) and generalize,
- monitoring off task behaviors by encouraging the students to return to task, sometimes offering individual rewards,
- encouragement to sound out words as they read them,
- provision for daily practice of the alphabet to stimulate rote memorization,
- provision of numerous opportunities (worksheets and drills) to improve letter-sound associations,
- provision of individual teacher or aide or peer directed practice opportunities in the areas of reading and writing,
- whenever possible, use of the native language to provide necessary explanations,

- verbal encouragement and praise to improve low self-esteem,
- provision of additional time to complete assigned tasks,
- echo-reading of vocabulary words,
- shift of tasks to reduce frustration, and
- notes or calls to the home seeking support in following up on daily instruction and assigned tasks (homework).

A few teachers indicated using the Total Physical Response (TPR) (Asher, 1960) method, along with specially designed instructional materials for second language learners.

According to teachers, in spite of all the modifications implemented, progress continued to be slow, gains attained one day were not permanent/sustained. These students were not developing academic savvy. Further, comments in the referral reports and in the conclusions of psychological reports as well as in the summary of deliberations available stated clearly that according to teachers and evaluators, the educational needs of these students, "required a change of setting and approach." The third research question, later on in this report deals with these issues and a prognosis for eventual success.

Low Language Proficiency

At time of referral, the records of the 16 students under study included documentation of low English language proficiency. Oral language levels were determined by the administration of the Language Assessment Scales (LAS) (De Avila & Duncan, 1977).⁹ Available data

⁹ The LAS yields scores that are converted to language proficiency levels. There are five levels according to LAS developers. A LAS level 1 indicates low or no skills in the target language, a LAS level 5 indicates native-like proficiency. Traditionally, school districts consider LAS levels 1-3 as indicators of low language proficiency levels. If it is the English version that is used, and the student obtains LAS levels 1, 2 or 3, the student is considered of limited English proficiency (LEP). LAS levels 4 and 5 are commonly used to place or reclassify second language learners into mainstream classes since they signify near or native-like proficiency. The descriptors given by the developers are:
Level 1= Non-speaker. Uses gestures and single words to communicate.

indicates that 81% of the students of Mexican-descent (81% born in U.S.A., 19% born in Mexico), in this study, entering our public schools in kindergarten, second or third grades had low levels of English language proficiency and the remaining 19% seemed to develop them later by the end of their first year in school. It appeared to teachers that as instruction in literacy skills progressed, students were not able to catch up in spite of individual efforts to overcome the learning gap.

Findings related to oral language proficiency suggest that underdevelopment of English, and in some cases Spanish, language skills seems to be a primary factor in limited academic progress in literacy (Collier & Hoover, 1987; Cullison, 1994; Peregoy & Boyle, 1991; Steinberg, Blind & Chan, 1984).

Difficulties Sustaining Initial Gains

All children placed in academic English programs, that is, programs emphasizing English reading and writing readiness, and for older students, English reading, did exhibit initial gains as recorded in teachers' comments. Yet, students appearing to be progressing could not sustain the rate of success as instructional demands changed. It seems that professionals misjudged the students' linguistic abilities considering their early developing communication abilities as equivalent to full competence (BICS + CALP) of the native speaker; consequently, not monitoring the language of instruction and the context in which the learning opportunity was embedded. Modifications made did not address their crucial need for comprehensible input (Krashen, 1981). Further, the lack of comprehensible input seem to have placed greater pressures on the

Level 2= Non-speaker. Uses phrases and some simple sentences to communicate.

Level 3= Uses awkward constructions and has numerous errors in utterances.

Level 4= Fluent speaker. Speaks coherently but with noticeable errors.

Level 5= Fluent speaker. Speaks with errors.

students who in spite of applying great effort to learning were not advancing, but rather struggling in their classrooms according to teachers' comments during their early years in school. This pattern of limited progress in accordance with expectations created pressures on students manifested in teachers' comments in progress reports which revealed a shift from encouragement to prescription. Table 4 illustrates these shifts.

Initial accomplishments seemed to be a function of the typical academic-oriented kindergarten curriculum which advances from simple, highly concrete activities to intellectual more abstract ones. For example, teachers move from, "What do we call this?, How many bears do we see on the page?, Can you do this?", to "What is the first sound we hear in the word dog?, What a nice story, who can tell me what happened first?, Who remembers what happened last?, Who can tell us how is the boy in the story?" A review of the children's English proficiency at that time as well as analysis of material from the parents' interviews led the researcher to estimate that the children were either beginning to develop their BICS or were at mid-point in development requiring additional contextualization and time to strengthen their language skills before successfully completing the usual academic tasks of kindergarten and first graders.

Not all factors promoting poor academic performance and promoting referrals have been discussed yet. The section following Table 4 deals with the remaining three directly related to school, and a later separate section with those related to home support.

Table 4.

Pressures to Perform: Teachers' Comments in Progress Reports, Shifts in Perception

Initial teacher's comment	Final teacher's comment
Learns well	Needs help at home with all academic areas. Needs to improve in reading. Needs to follow directions.
No problems	Needs help with letters.
Great improvement	Modest progress and efforts require more dedication.
Gaining confidence	Needs to work on reading: Not able to read and understand her reader.
Showing a lot of improvement	Needs extra help with alphabet and sounds.
Has made steady progress.	Needs special help for reading. Needs practice to do better.
Tries hard. Has progressed.	Needs to build a stronger foundation.

Other Factors Related to School Impacting on Learning Opportunities and Academic Performance

Mobility and frustration are factors which were common among all the students involved in this study. Physical as well as programmatic mobility promote interruptions in the development of learning, instructional and social patterns. During the early years (K-1), students

moved within or across school districts interrupting established patterns of instruction, coming in contact with different instructional situations, materials and teachers. In addition, some students began kindergarten enrolled in classrooms identified by the district as bilingual and were later reclassified as monolingual learners in first grade, receiving all academic instruction in English. Some of these were later reclassified again as bilingual/LEP when minimal progress was achieved in the English only classroom. Other students were enrolled in all English programs and either by first or second grade, after repeating kindergarten or first, were reclassified as bilingual/LEP because they had not been successful in developing early literacy skills in English. Among these students, it seems that reclassification was triggered by underdevelopment of skills in the language arts areas as determined by standardized statewide tests.

For all the 16 participating students, instruction in the classroom has been beyond their instructional level. This was supported by comments on previous records and those made by teachers, parents, the students themselves and the most recent psychological reports. One of the psychologists reflected in earlier notes available, "frustrated in class because much of the expected work is too difficult for him". Thus, interruptions in the learning/developmental and instructional patterns, low language skills and personal frustration as an outgrowth of ineffective efforts to understand instruction, and/or blockages caused by a possible processing disability, impacted on the potential of the students to improve their academic performance. Their low self-esteem concerning academics, was evident through what one psychologist reported as "attitudes of passivity or of testing the limits of teachers' patience"; under such conditions, major support was considered necessary. Actually, such dire conditions originate a pattern whereby students' frustration

promotes teachers' frustration which in turn promote referral to special education. Frequently, professionals working with students like those described so far, consider special education to be the only option available that could turn the course of ineffectiveness and failure; parents who give their permission believe it too. According to Cummins (1984), it is this combination, of teachers' concerns and frustration, that promote referrals of second language learners to special education.

Factors Related to the Home Impacting on Learning Opportunities and Academic Performance

Under current educational challenges, schools cannot do it all (Allington, 1994). Even the best schools serving the most advanced learners expect some type of support from the home for academic instruction. Research firmly suggests that the family is the strongest support for the young child during his/her early development (See Bronfenbrenner, 1979; and Leichter, 1974, for comprehensive reviews). In his review of earlier studies, Bronfenbrenner underscores the role of parental support, through involvement, in improving the opportunities of academic success for children living in homes characterized by poor socio-economic conditions. The 16 children of Mexican-descent in this study did come from low socio-economic backgrounds and were not achieving as expected in their later school years (grades 3 through 5). What did the home offer in addition to love, concern and a stable family life? The material in the following sub-sections was obtained from parents' and students' interviews and field notes from conversations with teachers and psychologists. It is not historical, but current material, yet it provides perspective to the instructional challenges these children pose.

A dichotomous language environment. It is in social interaction and experiences mediated by speech wherein lies the source of cognitive,

linguistic and social development according to Rogoff (1990), Tharp and Gallimore (1988) and Vygotsky (1978). Discussing and reflecting upon one's actions leads to greater insights and advancement of cognitive abilities. Freire (1979) and Cummins (1984) suggest that it leads to empowerment of the individuals. Within the homes of the participants in this study, the languages of communication now are English and Spanish. A form of semi-diglossic¹⁰ situation exists in these bilingual homes where gradually, separate domains or roles have been arbitrarily assigned to the Spanish and English used there.

Variation in language preference seems to exist in homes where the mother is Spanish dominant. In sixty-nine percent of the homes, the mothers declared themselves as Spanish dominant, with higher language and literacy skills in Spanish than English. In most of these homes, a few years ago, Spanish was the only language used. While mothers expressed greater abilities in Spanish than English, their children expressed a range of preferences. Six expressed a preference for English usage giving such reasons as knowing more words in it, being easier, liking it more, using it more, and being fun. One expressed a preference for Spanish, the language of home and the Church. The other four indicated equal appreciation for both, yet separating them by domains: home and school; family, friends and school. The remaining mothers recognized their limited abilities in Spanish and their shift in dominance and preference for English. Their children presented an interesting variation. Two of them

¹⁰ For lack of a more appropriate referent, the researcher has chosen certain aspects of the linguistic concept defined by Ferguson (1959) to describe what was reported by parents and children. According to Ferguson, "[d]iglossia is a relatively stable language situation in which in addition to the primary dialect of the language, which may include a standard or regional standard, there is a very divergent, highly codified, often grammatically more complex, super-posed variety..." (336). The definition itself includes much more than selected here to represent what the researcher intends to depict. Key factors are stable language situation, in addition to, very divergent, grammatically more complex, super-posed.

matched their mothers' preference for English. Two of the remaining three indicated no preference, rather favored both languages considering that "they are fun". The last student in this group indicated preference for Spanish, the language that prevails in most family-related activities. Further, children reported an additional distinction, English for older siblings, Spanish for the younger ones suggesting efforts at language transmission, or maintenance. Children were very specific indicating that Spanish was for family members and friends who couldn't speak, or wouldn't understand English.

Social networks increase access to language models but the development of intact linguistic systems becomes fragmented. Social networks include family members not living at home as well as friends of the family. All children were involved in family or friends visitations and looked forward to them on weekends. Mostly, these were within the immediate geographical area. Grandmothers, aunts, uncles and cousins were the hosts. Once in a while friends visited or were visited also, specially those families whose relatives were in Mexico, or elsewhere in the United States. These visitations required the use of both Spanish and English, with the exception of one child whose grandmother preferred to use English when the children were around.

Shared meal time is an opportunity where language can be modeled and used quite extensively; it is the time when the family sits together as a unit and adults as well as children have the opportunity to talk about their daily experiences and discoveries. Also, the use of language by adults to express a variety of concerns would naturally emerge during this shared time. Contrary to common belief, not all families ate together. Some fathers had night shifts at work so the children ate with their siblings, or at their grandmothers', or with their mother at home. Seven reported

that they were not allowed to talk at the table. Coincidentally, four of these students when they entered kindergarten scored at low levels (1-3) in both Spanish and English on the district's test for language proficiency (the Language Assessment Scales, or LAS). Two scored high in Spanish (level 4) and low in English (levels 1-2). One was not tested with the LAS, but her progress report for kindergarten indicates low language skills in English. Another seven reported talking about topics which included: movies, soap operas (*novelas*), dad's work, school work, friends, homework, animals, television programs, sports, new learnings and future plans. In bilingual homes, both English and Spanish were reported as the languages used for discussion. Spanish was used more often for the expression of personal preferences, emotions and problems, or to refer to family members. English was used for everything else, code-mixing was common.

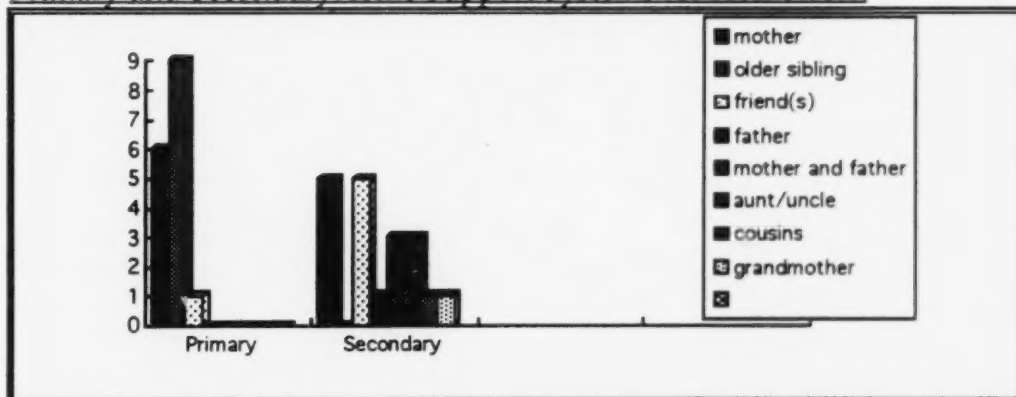
In summary, a rather rich diverse picture emerges from the realm of language usage. The caveat seems to be that one or both languages could remain underdeveloped because of the existing dichotomy.

Limitations with support networks. A review of progress reports of previous years revealed that 69% of the students did have major difficulties with homework. These were manifested in the form of incompletes or work not done. Support for the students emerged most naturally around homework. Students and the family members who participated in homework support and supervision in this subgroup indicated using Spanish and English (55%), or English only (36), or Spanish only (9%) in discussing homework. Fifty-six percent of the students depended primarily on their older brothers or sisters to resolve difficulties with assigned school-related tasks (See Figure 2). One student relied on her best friend for primary assistance. The remaining thirty-

seven percent depended on their mothers. Spanish dominant mothers reported difficulties in dealing with the requirements of homework being that sometimes they did not understand what was expected because they did not comprehend enough English to help. They were at BICS, the more concrete, not CALP, the abstract more complex level of English language proficiency as conceptualized by Cummins (1980, 1984). Those who depended on older siblings were at the mercy of their generosity and abilities. The benefit of working with older peers was the access to their knowledge and insights into the schooling process, and their higher English proficiency. Often, siblings were working on their own homework or projects, thus, assistance to the younger ones was given grudgingly; hence, the quality of mediation is questionable. Three grandmothers also helped with monitoring, and one, a school volunteer, tutored the child on beginning reading and writing. Her level of English proficiency is much higher according to the child's mother. The rest of the backup system for homework assistance included fathers, younger siblings, aunts, uncles, family friends and cousins.

Figure 2

Primary and Secondary Home Support Systems for Homework



Thus, in the homes of second language learners common tasks such as homework take different directions depending on the resources available and the language and academic knowledge of those involved in the task. Analysis of patterns of performance, needs and resources available seem to indicate that the assistance provided was not enough to reduce their learning gaps.

Participation in community life promotes learning but not sufficiently strong to support the demands of academic requirements. A way to link a linguistically and culturally diverse family to the target language and community is through shopping activities. These activities provide opportunities for further language development, use/practice and for incidental literacy development to occur through exposure and active participation in acquisition and negotiation activities. Shopping affords children and families the opportunity to use English in mainstream environments, and English and Spanish in ethnic stores. Only two of the children were not taken shopping by their parents. The remaining fourteen participated actively in the process: pointing, seeking, directing or talking about products and preferences. Some reading was practiced by searching for products and sales. More English than Spanish was used in the process according to self-reports from parents and children. Even though the quality of the experience could not be judged by the researcher, based on Rogoff's (1990) and Vygotsky's (1978) principles some learning or development had to occur through the activities in which the youngsters engaged at the stores. The unanswered question is, how much of this was beneficial as support, particularly, in improving the classroom learning opportunities. Did teachers take advantage of these opportunities in assigning home tasks (homework)?

The celebration of holidays and cultural festivities provided a rich opportunity for language use, development of information and establishment or strengthening of social networks. Mediated cultural learning experiences for the students in this study were provided by parents and grandparents in relation to major U.S.A. celebrations and holidays, not to Hispanic holidays. While Hispanic social traditions were learned through participation in such experiences as family and friends get-togethers, most mothers indicated a preference for the school to educate their children on aspects related to holidays since they themselves knew very little about the origins and reasons for establishing them. Holidays from Mexico were barely discussed now that families had moved across the border. English and Spanish were used more frequently than just English or Spanish to answer questions children posed about these festivities.

For most literacy activities related to holidays and celebrations the preferred language was English. According to both parents and children, holidays' stories were either read or told in English or both English and Spanish, providing opportunities to promote the development of listening, reading and speaking skills. In addition, such opportunities provided the context to model or discuss specific cultural preferences such as choice of language, perceptions of the world, interpretation of events and meaning or message relevant to the present conditions in which the family lives.

Limited uses of print in the home environment. In this study literacy has been defined as the ability to read, write and produce these in the appropriate contexts. Both children's and parents' interviews revealed that there was a certain amount of print within the homes, some reading and writing did occur in relation to certain activities.

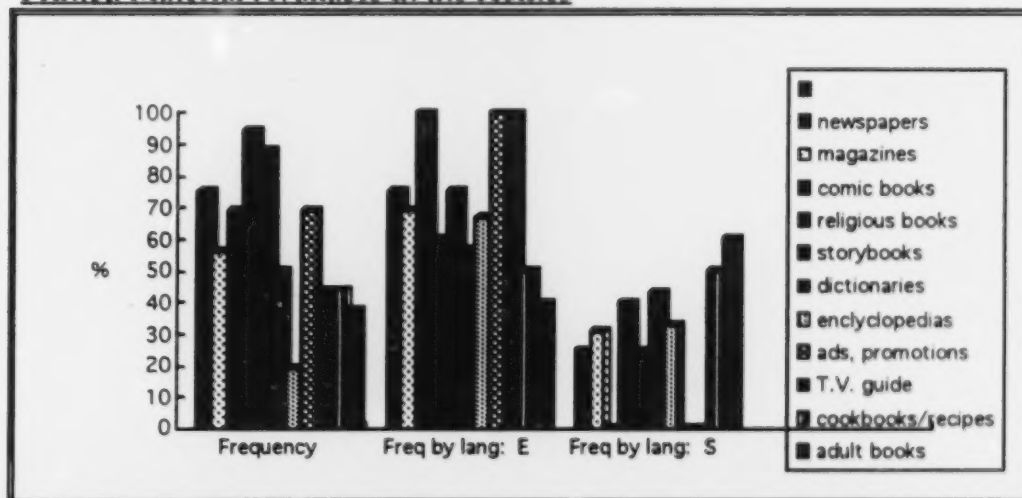
A checklist was utilized as the medium to capture and verify the availability of printed materials at home. Within the interview questionnaire, there were queries relating to literacy practices such as written communication with family members, reading preferences, homework, and recipe use. Parents' comments were followed up with requests for further explanations so as to obtain their perspective on the use of these materials.

All homes had some form of print present in the environment. Figure 3 includes printed materials and their frequency. Even though there were printed materials available in all homes, other factors come to bear in the interpretation of such finding. Not depicted in the figure are several important facts that parents and children, as informants, contributed in the discussion of this topic during the interview. For example, storybooks were available in most homes (88%), yet they were few (from one to four) and mostly appropriate for the younger siblings (aged three to four). Read by the mother to the children certain days and certain times, they were not available for free exploration and use. Economic limitations and high cost of materials were reasons given by parents for such control, thus, control restricted effectiveness potential: Materials were expensive, thus needed to be protected from the young ones given the limited resources available to the family to invest on this type of resource. Even though almost every home (94%) had religious books, only one child had access to the religious books. Several children had comic books (69%) which were also protected by them or their older siblings, and only read on special occasions. If parents read for their own pleasure, it was after children were put to sleep, or when they were sent to school. Thus, control restricted modeling and use. In addition, most books available at home to the students in this study were for lower age

levels of Spanish or English: The language of the books read to children was rather simple, "small words" were preferred by parents, with the text highly correlated to the illustrations in the books. This is an example of what Cummins (1980) refers to as BICS, in this case for young children. After a hard day's work schedule, the parents who read preferred to read for pleasure after the children were put to bed. Unfortunately, such conditions prevented children to see their parents as adults reading more complex and longer texts for personal enjoyment.

Figure 3.

Printed Material Available in the Homes



Given children's limited access to meaningful and age/grade appropriate print, reading for a specific purpose then became most frequently associated with shopping or homework, not necessarily with available materials most directly related to school such as newspapers, magazines, comic books, religious books, storybooks, dictionaries and encyclopedias. The latter two were available for older siblings, or aunts and uncles going to school not to the child/student participating in this study. Findings reported in this section about home practices indicate that

major home literacy activities are directly associated with the children's homework tasks: Homework was indeed the factor that brought about most often both reading and writing for a specific purpose. This is in consonance with Delgado-Gaitan's (1990) home literacy study. Of concern is the effect that such pattern has in promoting the concept that reading and writing are to be simple and mostly for school-related tasks which coincidentally, how many underachievers conceptualize literacy (Durkin, 1979).

Overall, it seems that a combination of low language skills, difficulties sustaining initial gains, not profitting as expected from instructional placements, mobility, the impact of a potential disability, ensuing frustration, and factors related to diversity such as home language usage, limited support networks, limited generalization of the ethnic experience, and restricted use of print, lead to the development of patterns of disability and the consequent referral of these second language learners to special education.

The Infrastructure of a Disability: Patterns in Performance

While the previous section examined factors impacting on perceptions and performance focusing both on teachers and students, this section depicts depth patterns in students' performance as they struggled to develop literacy skills within their classrooms. Overall, similarities and differences across levels and students confirm a pattern of underachievement strongly related to language limitations and explained by special education personnel as originating from weaknesses in processing and memory.

Patterns in Measured Language Abilities

Historically, initial admission records to kindergarten, or to the grade level they entered when they arrived from Mexico in later years, revealed that 11 of the students had low English language proficiency levels (Levels 1-2) as documented by examination, two had a higher level (Level 3), and the records of three not tested with the LAS had comments from language specialists about their low general competence in English. Areas of weaknesses extrapolated from the study of language samples available indicate limitations in vocabulary, syntactical constructions, elaborations and morphological endings as well as the development of a simple cohesive text. Of the 13 students tested with LAS, ten obtained scoring equivalent to Level 1; one student obtained a Level 2 which is also considered as a non-speaker of the language, and the other two achieved a Level 3, still indicative of limited English proficiency. Of the three children not tested with LAS, progress reports in the first marking period indicated difficulties with oral expression, reading comprehension and attention.

Further analysis of the interviews, referral, evaluation and historical data revealed interesting patterns related to the students' language proficiency during their first two years of schooling:

- Most students with Home Language Surveys (HLS) indicating Spanish as the primary language of the home were placed in programs with great emphasis in initial reading and writing readiness in English regardless of the level attained in their English language proficiency examinations.
- Students with higher levels of oral Spanish (LAS 4-5) concurrently received beginning literacy instruction in both Spanish and English.

- Students placed in the English language programs appeared to do well the first half of the year, as documented in the progress reports, but declined in performance as they were unable to meet the end of the year, or following year's expectations for oral language and literacy development.
- Language samples kept on cumulative folders reflected levels of BICS but never CALP. Retelling and natural language samples included examples of learners at the initial word and gesture stage, learners at the telegraphic word and phrase stage, and learners at the basic sentence levels: neither their individual vocabulary nor sentence structure qualified as advanced. This supports teachers' comments pointing to underdevelopment of language for the grade level in which the child was enrolled at the time of referral.
- The frustration teachers encountered in the limited progress students evidenced in oral and written language proficiency motivated referrals to the Student Study Team (SST). Descriptive information at time of referral reveal that students had underdeveloped English language skills, problems with comprehension and could copy, but, with the exception of two, not develop original cohesive written texts on their own regardless of their grade level.
- Parents of children with limited English skills requested their placement in monolingual programs expecting that this led to faster and better language acquisition. This assumption, later on, created confusion among them when they were called to the SST meeting because their child was not learning as expected in spite of having developed a basic level of

English for conversational and survival needs. It was clear to the researcher that they were not aware of CALP.

Analysis of data from evaluation reports drafted at referral time reflect the following patterns:

- Performance on the verbal scale of the WISC-R ranged from significantly below average (Scaled score= 54) to a high above average (SS= 105), with most students being within the low average (SS= 80-89) to average (SS= 90-109) range ($X = 84.6$, low average).
- For most students, performance in diagnostic language tests reflected language abilities below average (depressed scores) suggesting receptive and productive language delays ranging from .3 to 2.5 years below the average for age or grade level ($X = 1$ year below norm). Specifically, gaps identified in this area include: poor sentence structure (oral and/or written), difficulty comprehending and/or reproducing complex sentence structure, and difficulty formulating sentences. Older students had difficulty naming or understanding synonyms, antonyms and multiple meaning words, a pattern found to be common among students with language learning disabilities (Wiig & Semel, 1981).

Retention Patterns

Eleven of the 16 students were retained once: 55% in kindergarten, 18% in first, and 27% by second grade. Eight of the 11 children beginning kindergarten and reading readiness in English were retained because of great difficulties in recognizing letters and letter-sound relationships, limited knowledge of the alphabet, limited vocabulary and difficulties in oral expression (syntax as well as cohesion and intelligibility) noticed

during sharing time. Two children beginning with dual language instruction were also retained for the same reasons. Initial gains included socialization skills, fine motor skills, recognition of some letters (three to eight), acquisition of some of the expected vocabulary, rote counting, and recognizing and naming some of the colors.

Poor performance. Further analysis of initial progress reports for kindergarten and first grade, plus material from the interviews, revealed certain patterns related to poor performance:

- Lack of sustained or continuous progress in reading readiness led to retention in the early grades 69% of the time.
- What teachers consider to be poor academic performance in the language arts is related to limited skills in the following areas:

English language development,

speaking in complete sentences

speaking clearly

broad vocabulary

Participation in class discussions

Reading readiness

picture reading

naming and recognizing letters of the alphabet

recognizing letter-sound correspondence

rhyming

drawing conclusions

identifying sequence

Following directions

Beginning reading

drawing conclusions

identifying sequence
 identifying cause and effect
 word attack

Written expression

Independent work

Effective use of time (time on task)

Dislike of instructional experience (Did not want to go to school.)

Analysis of data generated during the referral/evaluation period in later years (second or third in most cases) revealed the following patterns:

- Data on achievement potential was gathered through the administration of measures of intellectual ability¹¹ with considerable bias against a culturally and linguistically diverse population. Only three students were tested in Spanish and English. Scores on intellectual potential (full scale scores) ranged from 79, which is low borderline to 109 which represents the top of the average range ($X = 92$, average). Most students (94%) achieved higher scores on performance ($X = 96$, average) than on verbal ($X = 84$, low average).
- In addition to intellectual assessment, several measures were administered to assess abilities in processing and memory.¹²

¹¹ Of the 16 students in this study, 15 were administered the Wechsler Intelligence Scales for Children (WISC) (Wechsler, 1974), one student was given the Bateria Woodcock Psico-Educativa en Español (Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery). Two students were administered only the performance part of the WISC, three were given the Leiter International Performance Scale (Leiter, 1979), and one student was given the Kauffman Assessment Battery for Children (K-ABC) (Kauffman and Kauffman, 1983).

¹² To assist with the identification of processing and memory problems, six measures were favored: the Beery Test of Visual Motor Integration, the Visual Aural Digit Span (VADS), Bender Gestalt Visual Motor Test, Draw-A-Person, Ravens' Progressive Matrices and the Motor Visual Perception Test (MVPT). Some students were administered two or three of the measures, perhaps in an attempt to be thorough about confirmation or disconfirmation of problems noticed during the administration of the intelligence battery.

Overall, results reiterate delayed development as well as memory and processing difficulties. Areas found deficient include: memory (56% of the students), poor auditory processing (44%), poor integration of visual and/or auditory stimuli (44%), difficulties in focusing attention (19%) and difficulties generalizing (19%).

- Academic achievement (language, reading and mathematics) was evaluated through the use of parts of diagnostic batteries¹³ and/or commonly used achievement tests. Sometimes combinations were used to double check results on other measures, or to gather additional information.
- Scores on reading achievement ranged from a .8 to a 2.0 below expected grade level performance. While grade level delays were not so great, the types of limitations noticed throughout different assessment tasks did indicate significant problems in: oral reading which ranged from a preprimer to a primer level, sight word recognition which ranged as the reading from preprimer to primer levels, inadequate sound-symbol associations, minimal word attack skills, low reading (oral or written) comprehension, and difficulties with blending, specially consonant clusters.
- Written patterns like oral language reflect delays ranging from one to two years below grade level ($X = 1.0$). Analysis of written language samples and comments by evaluators

¹³ Records of students participating in this study reflected that they were administered full or partial batteries like the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-educational Battery, or parts of the Brigance Diagnostic Assessment of Basic Skills, or the Peabody Individual Achievement Test (PIAT), or Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT), to draw information for instructional planning.

and the researcher revealed:

limited spelling skills suggesting difficulties with sound-symbol associations,
poor sentence structure exhibiting difficulties with the placement of syntactical elements, omission of key morphological elements, and poor word choice, in addition to the overuse of basic sentence patterns, and underdevelopment and poor integration of thoughts in written compositions.

- Overall scores on mathematics suggest that children have less difficulties within this area than reading and/or written language. Analysis of mathematics differences range from a -.6 to a +.9 years below or above grade level. Study of individual performance on all mathematics measures indicate that the students were having difficulties with applications which were embedded in word problems.

Poor Work Habits

Students in this study had difficulties doing and returning their assigned homework consistently, could not or would not follow directions, could not or would not work independently (According to one of the teachers' comments, in class he, "... visited a lot".), and critically, in class they did not paid consistent attention to what was being discussed, modeled, or practiced. Parents and children assured the researcher during the interviews that great efforts were invested on trying to do the homework, which frequently could not be finished, or was wrong. Mothers did monitor the work to the best of their abilities. Unfortunately, difficulties in school and at home related to assigned tasks promoted poor

work habits which seemed to increase, or did not improve much, as the lags in academic performance increased.

The following section presents profiles by grade. they are not to be construed as representative of the three grade levels involved, but rather as informative of the patterns the students under study reflected as a group. Tables 5, 6 and 7 provide general information on the students some of which has been incorporated in aggregate form into the following grade level profiles.

Third Graders. Two boys and a girl comprised the third grade cohort. They shared certain patterns related to performance, and differed in others. (See Table 5.)

Commonalities extrapolated from records studied include:

A significant number of absences (more than 20), particularly in the earlier grades when teachers are trying to develop patterns to facilitate the development of reading readiness and beginning reading.

Poor performance reports in the following reading-related areas:

- letter recognition,
- letter-sound association,
- vocabulary,
- oral sentence structure,
- written language,
- attention to instruction,
- independent learning, and
- homework.

Mobility which ranged from transfer from two to seven schools had to affect advancement toward reading success.

Retention was recommended for all as efforts on behalf of the student did not lead to the expected improvement in reading performance.

Overall, performance on the CTBS scores was below the 16th. percentile in reading, written language and mathematics which is considered at a level requiring remediation.¹⁴

Great difficulties in advancing through reading readiness and beginning reading promoted reclassification of students who began their schooling in English only programs.¹⁵ They had to be reclassified to receive bilingual services which were expected to improve their opportunities to succeed in literacy development. Slow rate of progress in reading in turn promoted referrals to special education by the end of first grade, and placement by second grade with a greater focus on the improvement of slowly developing reading abilities.

Intellectual abilities could impact on learning to read. This group is considered of average intelligence judging from the information available on the results of the WISC-R, thus, the potential for success is strong.

According to evaluators, the students' learning gaps necessitated correction in the following areas:

- word recognition,
- word pronunciation,
- oral reading fluency,

¹⁴ The California Test of Basic Skills is an achievement test measuring growth in reading, written language and mathematics among other aspects. It is administered yearly as a state requirement to evaluate academic competence within and across school districts in California.

¹⁵ Bilingual program models varied across schools and districts, for example, some schools had tutors, others had bilingual teachers teaching in Spanish and English, others had bilingual teachers teaching in English with some translation as needed.

written spelling,
orthographic conventions,
sentence and paragraph development, and
development of narratives.

The above similarities were not the only challenges appearing on record. The following patterns reflect more of the diversity within this group:

Some had received additional support from Chapter I specialists, which did improve somewhat previous limitations.

Homework support came mostly from older siblings who also had to work on their assigned tasks.

Evaluations at time of referral reported that the two boys had auditory memory and visual sequencing weaknesses requiring a different approach to reading instruction.

In general, for these three third graders the pattern of underachievement was strongly centered on reading skills and competencies, followed by written expression; hence, poor performance reflected a weak linguistic infrastructure.

Fourth Graders. Three girls and four boys constitute the fourth grade cohort. (See Table 6.) Variation is greater among this group than the previous one by virtue of greater number of participants ($n=7$).

Regardless of differences, there were common patterns which include:

Of the three groups, this one had the lowest English language levels. All students, began their kindergarten with limitations in vocabulary and expressive language: Records show that, they all had difficulties in learning to read and to express themselves with great coherence and appropriateness.

A shift in language use from Spanish-only to Spanish and English was noticed by third grade; by then, all students were living in bilingual environments at home, with the exception of the girl who arrived from Mexico in third grade in whose home Spanish was the only language used at home.

The intellectual abilities for this group ranged within the average levels.

Evaluators considered that all students needed to work on improving reading comprehension in order to reduce the increasing learning gaps.

Diversity in this cohort was across all areas, specifically:

Language proficiency increased by third grade, but differed by level and language. Children at the lowest levels showed greater increases; English language improved more than Spanish.

Reading difficulties varied. Some children had great challenges than others when working with:

- letter recognition,
- letter-sound association,
- oral sentence structure,
- drawing conclusions,
- written language,
- attention,
- repetition,
- following directions, and
- doing their homework.

Homework support was provided primarily by mothers who had difficulty understanding what was required, and with evaluating the correctness or appropriateness of the answers. The backup

network for homework included other family members and friends. Reclassification was necessary for five of the seven students. Two were assigned Non-LEP status, and three were identified as LEP. Mobility in this group ranged from no change to change to four schools.

Retention was recommended and implemented for four children. Referral to special education was either at the end of first grade or the beginning of second. Some children were placed immediately; for others, placement was deferred a year.

CTBS percentiles available, indicated that literacy competencies required different levels of development since the range in reading was between 11 and 50, and in written language from five to 48. Abilities among this group were greater than among the third graders.

Evaluators proposed that different children should work on the following skills to improve their literacy competency:

- word recognition.
- word recognition,
- oral reading fluency,
- elaboration of the basic sentence pattern,
- orthography,
- spelling, and
- composing.

Evaluations during referral revealed patterns of weaknesses similar to the third graders: problems with auditory processing and auditory memory, but the one posing greater challenges for learners belonging to this group was weak verbal skills.

Unquestionably, a search for patterns among second language learners with or without disabilities continuously communicates heterogeneity. For example, of the four children in this cohort who had greater problems, three had been retained, three had low language proficiency according to testing, and one was considered a limited English speaker; two were reclassified into bilingual instruction, one was taken out of the bilingual program, and the fourth remained in bilingual placement. In addition to language, the other major problems were related to reading. Language development as promoted in our schools needs to be revisited, particularly in schools enrolling greater numbers of second language learners.

Fifth graders. This cohort included two boys and three girls; such representation is due to willingness to participate in the study rather than to actual program ratio. More boys than girls were invited to participate, but fewer were interested. This group also, like the previous one, includes one girl who arrived from Mexico in second grade, thus a footnote was created on Table 7 to summarize data available from her first year in our schools which is not kindergarten.

Literacy development patterns across this group vary just like within the other two discussed previously. Similarities within the cohort include:

While Spanish was the language, or one of the languages for home use in kindergarten, by the time the students were in third grade it had been displaced in importance by English, which was the primary language of discourse among older siblings regardless of their level of competence in it. Interviews with the children and their parents revealed that learning English is like a rite of passage: Once you

learn it, no matter how high or low, you are in (into the group of the Have's).¹⁶

All children improved their language proficiency, with their Spanish continuing to be higher than English, but with greater overall linguistic gains in the latter.

The academic areas related to literacy development that presented the greatest challenges to the students were:

- letter-sound association,
- vocabulary development,
- oral sentence structure,
- attention,
- understanding, and
- homework.

Homework support in this grade was provided mostly by older siblings and friends, parents could not follow the requirements of the upper grades, or the level of metalinguistic skills in English necessary to produce the estimated right answers.

Reclassification was deemed necessary for all; one was given Non-LEP status, and the other five qualified to receive bilingual instruction in a transition classroom per the guidelines of the districts.

Percentiles in the CTBS revealed a pattern of reading (ranging from one to 19) and written language (ranging from nine to 26) weaknesses greater than mathematics. Performance in first grade

¹⁶ Teachers report that in some communities in California, this divides the population of Mexican-descent into those who have (learned English well) and those who have not. All kinds of social rewards come to those who learn fast and well. This leads to the formation of an underclass within a group and the ensuing separation rather than cohesion which is vital for subsistence and success in this area.

among this group was as low as the other groups.

Variability also differed somewhat from the patterns exhibited by the two other groups; among fifth graders variability was reflected in:

Retention patterns: Recommended for four of the students either by kindergarten or first grade, it was actually implemented at different times: two were retained in kindergarten, one in first and the other in second.

Grade of referral varied too: One referral to special education was initiated early in kindergarten, two were in second, two in third and the last one in fourth. Most of the students in this group, like third graders were given two to three years to catch up, but unlike fourth graders who had four years of opportunities to improve before being referred.

Among this group, the range of intellectual abilities was the greatest from borderline (79) to above average (108). Students with low full scale scores in the WISC-R were administered the Leiter which yielded a positive difference of 12 to 18 points in favor of learning disabilities rather than mild mental retardation.

According to evaluators learning gaps among these students varied too thus, they recommended:

For most students,
word recognition,
word pronunciation,
reading fluency,
reading comprehension,
spelling, and
composing sentences and longer texts.

For fewer students,
printing,
elaboration of basic sentence pattern, and
orthography.

Fifth graders like fourth and third graders, exhibited similar patterns of needs reflected as weaknesses or limitations in their academic records. The main challenges they also had to overcome were in areas related to language. Overall, there is a need to promote the development of higher levels of language in these students by modifying instruction, and identifying strong support networks which model higher language use and literacy practices.

Parsimonious analysis of each case, interviews as well as records, strengthen the belief that because most of these children began with low levels of language proficiency in one or both languages and limited experiences preparing them to enter, and meet the expectations of, a mainstream classroom structured for children with greater skills, or information on how to succeed in class, their behavior(s) and patterns of performance strongly suggested to their teachers and evaluators inabilities which needed remediation. To distinguish between inability due to disability and inability due to poor teaching conditions and limitations in linguistic/experiential background, required a kind of risk taking which Katherine Paterson (1994) calls "marching off the map". That is, going beyond what is established and expected. For the teachers and evaluators involved in this study, the established and expected is that when a second language learner or student with limited skills does not learn in school, the problem is with or within the child. Comments that indicated frustration on the part of the student with the learning conditions only merited investigation of the student; suggestions for

change were for the student. It seems that the environment and teaching practices were beyond need of careful study and evaluation. Who would date to tackle it? What would be the results of such challenge?

Modifications needed to be instituted indeed, but changing the student only is of limited effect in attempts to promote sustained success and improved performance as the investigations of Ortiz and her colleagues at The University of Texas have documented.

The next section considers the total child in relation to past and present schooling with a prognosis for future accomplishment, followed by a section including recommendations aimed at increasing the rate of success of students such as those on which this study focused, and improving the possibilities for potential reclassification out of special education.

Table 5.

Partial Profile of Third Grade Second Language Learners of Mexican-Descent
Referred and Placed in Special Education

Profile of Strengths and Weaknesses	No. 13	No. 5	No. 6
1. Preschool Attendance	Yes	No	No
2. Home Language Survey			
Kindergarten	S/E	S/E	S/E
Third grade	E	E/S	E/S
3. LAS Levels in Kindergarten			
English	-	3	3
Spanish	3	3	-
4. Academic Needs in Grades K-1			
Letter recognition	x	x	x
Letter-sound association	x	x	x
Vocabulary	x	x	x
Oral sentence structure	x	x	x
Drawing conclusions	x	x	x
Written language	x	x	x
Attention to lesson or task	x	x	x
Repetition	x	x	x
Individual instruction	x	x	x
Fine and/or gross motor skills	x	x	x
Support with homework	x	x	x
Following directions	x	x	x
5. Absences (+ 20)	Yes	Yes	Yes
6. Chapter I Support in Reading	Yes	No	No
7. Reclassification	LEP	LEP	LEP
8. Mobility in the Early School Years (number of schools)	3	7	2

Table 5.

Partial Profile of Third Grade Second Language Learners of Mexican-Descent
Referred and Placed in Special Education (Continued):

Profiles of Strengths and Weaknesses	No.	No.	No.
9. Grade Retention Recommendation	2	0	1
10. Retention	2	2	2
11. Referral to Special Education (gr.)	1	1	1
12. Evaluation and Placement (grade)	2	2	2
13. WISC-R Results			
Verbal	94	94	105
Performance	104	98	102
Full Scale	98	95	104
14. CTBS Percentiles in First Grade			
Reading	03	08	01
Language	01	12	09
Mathematics	01	06	15
15. Recommendations for Intervention			
Appearing in the I. E. P.			
Practices to improve reading			
word recognition	x	x	x
word pronunciation	x	x	x
oral reading	x	x	x
reading comprehension	x		x
Practices to improve writing			
printing			x
spelling	x	x	x
elaboration of basic sentence	x	x	
composing	x	x	x
orthography	x	x	x
Following directions	x	x	x

Table 6.
Partial Profile of Fourth Grade Second Language Learners of Mexican-Descent Referred and Placed in Special Education

Profile of Strengths and Weaknesses	No. 14	No. 15	No. 9	No. 10	No. 2	No. 3	No. 4
1. Preschool Attendance	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
2. Home Language Survey							
Kindergarten	S	E	S	S/E	S/E	-	S
Third grade	S/E	E/S	E/S	E/S	E/S	S	S/E
3. LAS Levels in Kindergarten							
English	1	-	1	1	1	-	-
Spanish	3	-	5	2	3	-	4
4. Academic Needs in Grades K-1							
Letter recognition	x	-	-	x	x	*17	-
Letter-sound association	x	x	x	x	x	-	-
Vocabulary	x	x	x	x	x	-	x
Oral sentence structure	x	-	x	x	x	-	x
Drawing conclusions	x	-	-	x	-	-	x
Written language	x	-	x	x	-	-	x
Attention to lesson or task	-	-	-	x	-	-	-
Repetition	x	-	-	-	x	-	-
Individual instruction	x	x	-	x	x	-	x
Fine and/or gross motor skills	-	-	-	-	-	-	x
Following directions	x	x	x	x	x	-	x
Support with homework	x	-	x	x	x	-	-
5. Absences (+ 20)	-	-	-	-	x	-	-
6. Chapter I Support in Reading (K-3)	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
7. Reclassification	NLEP	LEP	NLEP	LEP	LEP	-	-
8. Mobility in the Early School Years	3	0	0	4	1	2	1
9. Grade Retention Recommendation	K	-	-	-	K	1	K
10. Retention	K	-	-	-	K	1	K
11. Referral to Special Education	3	3	3	1	1	3	3
12. Evaluation and Placement	4	3	3	2	1	4	4

¹⁷ This student came from Mexico in third grade. LAS levels at that time were: Spanish 4 and English 1. Her needs when she entered our schools were: cannot follow directions, low reading comprehension, poor listening skills, poor writing skills, constant repetition, reassurance and instruction one-on-one. Her records indicate that she came from a family who lived in extreme poverty in Mexico. By fourth grade both are spoken in the home. According to her mother, she was retained in Mexico in first grade.

Table 6.

Partial Profile of Fourth Grade Second Language Learners of Mexican-Descent Referred and Placed in Special Education (Continued):

Profiles of Strengths and Weaknesses	No. 14	No. 15	No. 9	No. 10	No. 2	No. 3	No. 4
13. WISC-R Results							
Verbal	-	94	90	80	90	-	78
Performance	-	96	104	93	95	100	111
Full scale	-	94	96	85	91	109	92
14. CTBS Percentiles in First Grade							
Reading	11	34	14	13	-	-	50
Language	12	48	5	-	-	-	54
Mathematics	11	85	19	12	-	-	58
15. Recommendations for Intervention							
Appearing in the I. E. P.							
Practices to improve reading							
word recognition							
word pronunciation	-	-	x	x	x	-	-
oral reading	x	x	x	x	x	-	x
reading comprehension	x	x	x	x	x	-	x
Practices to improve writing	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
printing							
spelling	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
elaboration of basic sentence	x	-	x	-	x	-	x
composing	x	-	-	x	-	-	x
orthography	x	-	x	-	x	x	x
Following directions	x	-	x	-	-	-	x
	-	-	-	x	x	-	-

Table 7.
Partial Profile of Fifth Grade Second Language Learners of Mexican-Descent Referred and Placed in Special Education

Profile of Strengths and Weaknesses	No. 1	No. 7	No. 8	No. 12	No. 11	No. 16
1. Preschool Attendance	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
2. Home Language Survey						
Kindergarten	S	S/E	S	S/E	S	-
Third grade	S/E	E/S	E/S	E/S	S/E	S/E
3. LAS Levels in Kindergarten						
English	1	1	2	1	1	-
Spanish	4	2	4	3	3	-
4. Academic Needs in Grades K-1						
Letter recognition	x	-	x	x	x	*18
Letter-sound association	x	x	x	x	x	-
Vocabulary	x	x	x	x	x	-
Oral sentence structure	x	x	x	x	x	-
Drawing conclusions	x	-	-	x	-	-
Written language	x	x	x	x	-	-
Attention to lesson or task	x	x	x	x	x	-
Repetition	x	x	x	x	x	-
Individual instruction	x	-	-	x	-	-
Fine and/or gross motor skills	-	-	-	x	-	-
Following directions	x	-	x	x	x	-
Support with homework	x	x	x	x	x	-
5. Absences (+20)	-	-	x	-	-	-
6. Chapter I Support in Reading	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
7. Reclassification	NLEP	LEP	LEP	LEP	LEP	LEP
8. Mobility in the Early School Years	4	2	0	4	0	2
9. Grade Retention Recommendation	K	K	-	1	K	-
10. Retention	K	1	-	2	K	-

¹⁸ This student came from Mexico in second grade. Her LAS levels indicated a Spanish 5 and an English 1. Her Home Language Survey (HLS) Spanish as the only language of the home. Instead of CTBS she took the SABE, a Spanish achievement test. Her reading performance was rated at 36% and in mathematics she obtained a 34%; neither the language percentile nor the grade equivalent levels were reported. Her problems seemed to be with low Spanish reading comprehension, English decoding skills, written language and attention.

Table 7.
Partial Profile of Fifth Grade Second Language Learners of Mexican-Descent Referred and Placed in Special Education (Continued):

Profiles of Strengths and Weaknesses	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
11. Referral to Special Education	3	2	3	3	K	4
12. Evaluation and Placement	3	4	3	3	1	4
13. WISC-R Results						
Verbal	57	70	98	78	54	96
Performance	80	94	118	102	73	71
Full scale	67/79 ¹⁹	79	108	88	61/79	82
14. CTBS Percentiles in First Grade						
Reading	19	1	3	-	19	-
Language	26	9	16	-	16	-
Mathematics	54	58	27	-	4	-
15. Recommendations for Intervention						
Appearing in the I. E. P.						
Practices to improve reading						
word recognition	x	-	x	x	x	x
word pronunciation	x	-	x	x	x	x
oral reading	x	x	-	x	x	x
reading comprehension	x	x	x	-	x	x
Practices to improve writing						
printing	-	-	-	x	x	-
spelling	x	x	x	x	x	-
elaboration of basic sentence	x	-	-	-	x	-
composing	x	x	-	x	x	x
orthography	x	x	x	-	x	-
Following directions	-	-	-	-	-	-

¹⁹ The second score reported here was included and utilized in the report to come up with a total score. It is the score obtained in the Leiter.

Would Intervention Work?: Prognosis for Success

Reading, writing and language have been significant challenges for the students in this study, particularly, language usage and apprehension of content presented through English, their second language. Problems with learning to read and limited linguistic gains were explained as memory and/or processing difficulties. The fact that the students were failing to understand the higher levels of language proficiency to which Cummins (1981, 1984) alludes when he refers to context-reduced language (CALP) was never questioned even though the students' frustration with instruction was recognized. The list of modifications made in classrooms suggests that teachers did have the intention to improve the students' learning opportunities, but, when growth was not as expected, referrals proceeded rather than a re-evaluation of the strategies being implemented to assist the student.

Meanwhile, at home, parents had different expectations for language and literacy development than those of school in relation to the levels of competence and effort that are necessary to succeed in academics. Thus, modeling in language and literacy was rather unstructured, unplanned, aimed at younger siblings, mostly as adults went about their business. The pattern emerged from the analysis of interviews and field notes of informal observations made in establishments and parks within the children's immediate communities.

This last section of the report revisits the academic and home support systems of these students, concluding that unless the nature of the learning opportunities change, both at school and at home, these students will remain low achievers and have a high probability of becoming dropouts by high school level as Steinberg, Blinde and Chan (1984) would

predict from their analysis of factors that seem to influence such termination with frustration related to underachievement in school.

Academic Support

Instructional Programming: Focus of the IEP

Commonly, the individualized education plan (IEP) proposes a structured and gradual approach to reduce the gap between actual performance and the school's curriculum expectations of the educational system. Supposedly, it takes into account the reasons for underachievement and incorporates the knowledge of specialists who propose strategies, and parents who provide insights on how to reduce the established discrepancies. In this study, the problem was that professionals focused on a potential disability, almost totally ignoring the impact that certain sociocultural factors had in the lives and academic performance of these students. Factors such as second language acquisition, limited comprehensible input, limited experiences related to literacy, mobility, frustration, inability to sustain gains, and exposure to models with limitations in their understanding of the optimal conditions that promote language and literacy development, did impact performance in the language arts. In the students' psychological report, the psychologists endorsed the use of multi-sensory approaches and small group instruction as strategies to improve the students' learning opportunities, but it was up to the resource teacher to determine the context and content of instruction and specific strategies that would promote improved and sustained academic performance.

The focus of the I.E.P. was purely on academic achievement; 90% of the objectives were intended to meliorate the development of literacy skills within a highly structured framework. Analysis revealed a direct relationship between the objectives in the plan and students' performance

in the achievement tests whose rather restricted view of literacy has been deplored by researchers and scholars (Oller, 1979). Further, goals and objectives were mostly in correspondence with the error patterns of tests, which is not inappropriate if one takes into consideration also other critical needs of the student. For example, on the test, the student could identify only 100 of 250 sight words, thus, the objectives stated: "read cvc words from a teacher made list with 80% accuracy, and read sight words from a list of 250 with 50% accuracy. This was IT to promote reading and language development in a student with very low language and reading scores! Table 8 lists areas requiring improvement and the strategies most frequently suggested to reduce identified learning gaps.

Items on the table suggest a skill-based approach to remediate learning gaps which in practice appropriately fulfills the purpose of special education since in public schools, skills-based instruction is usually synonymous of a remedial approach (Allington, 1994). While it is an efficient system for accountability, such an approach is too restrictive for learners whose developing English language proficiency requires acquisition of a broad linguistic base to encourage language predictions, construct meaning, and practice linguistic rule induction to develop metalinguistic awareness. Another inherent danger in this remedial approach for second language learners is that if the teacher does not have the understanding and training to work with them, invariably they will be treated as native speakers of English for instructional and evaluative purposes (Collier & Hoover, 1987), a practice in consonance with the specialists' monolingual-oriented and disability-focused training which was common at the time most specialists working with these children took their advanced graduate work toward certification. (All teachers had

Table 8.

Skills and Abilities To Be Developed in the RSP Classroom

Suggested strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Reading		
Decoding words from basic sight vocabulary lists, or from basals	15	94
Silent reading for comprehension	11	69
Oral reading	8	50
Oral language		
Use vocabulary words in sentences	3	19
Improve oral expression using correct vocabulary and sentence structure	3	19
Listening		
Letter-sound recognition	6	37
Writing		
Encoding vocabulary words dictated or reproduced from memory	9	56
Write sentences with correct capitalization, punctuation and grammar	9	56
Write paragraphs to develop a topic	4	25

teaching experience beyond four years).

Summarizing, if an overestimation of the student's English language proficiency exists, contextualized and context-reduced abilities become one and the same to those assisting the students, then the language of testing becomes English, and the interpretation of assessment results during deliberations, as well as the recommendations for programming and instruction, will not take into consideration the status of the students as second language learners and the modifications that might be necessary to facilitate their success. A review of all existing records available to the researcher revealed that overestimation is indeed common as Cummins (1981, 1984) and others (Garcia, 1985; Maldonado-Colón, 1984, Ortiz and her colleagues at The University of Texas: Garcia & Ortiz, 1988; Wilkinson & Ortiz, 1986; Shepard and Smith, 1981, among others) have found in their studies.

Literacy in the School

Promotion of language and literacy development at school was probably as limited as at home, specially during the early years. Most students entered into programs where English, not Spanish was the primary means of communication and instruction. The development of language initiated in the home through use of the native language (L1) was supplanted by the introduction of a new linguistic system(L2), not modified for the second language learner as data reflect. The second language became the vehicle to teach advanced concepts critical to the development of literacy skills at a time when the learner was still in the process of developing the basic linguistic framework or insights of that language, that is, building his/her proficiency in it. Consequently, limited comprehension impacted on the development of schemata necessary to "examine, rethink, revise, and compare new knowledge and experiences

to the mind's storehouse of knowledge" (Robb, 1994, p. 52). When L2 is used as the primary tool to learn and to communicate in school, while the student is not ready, studies reviewed suggest as potential outcomes: frustration, lack of focus or attention, poor retention, limited association and in many cases eventual dropping out (Steinberg, Blinde & Chan, 1984). Also, when L2 becomes the medium of instruction, new knowledge is usually outside of the ZPD. Under such condition, the learners manage to increase their general communicative skills, but seem unable to grasp or retain conceptual knowledge encoded in sociolinguistic forms beyond their grasp (Cummins, 1984). The student speaks English but seems unable to synthesize, to express orally and/or in written form his/her thoughts, in clear and grammatically correct ways, and has difficulty with metalinguistic analysis and comprehension at higher levels. In addition, common practices instituted in school systems across California make the challenge even greater for the second language learner with contextualized language skills (BICS) who is not advancing on his/her understanding of decontextualized language (CALP). Within the participating districts, students, regardless of reading and language ability levels are expected to use and learn from grade level texts. Such a practice requires that a fifth grader regardless of reading abilities work in the fifth grade textbook; a practice that can be lethal, academically as well as psychologically, particularly, since according to Steinberg, Blinde and Chan (1984), "in addition to socioeconomic status and Hispanic origin, the chief predictor of dropping out [of high school] is early academic failure" (p. 126). Mediation offered by teachers did reflect some attempts to help the student go through the materials rather than to apprehend and appropriate the content (incorporating it into existing schemata). Thus,

transition into complex levels of language and literacy becomes difficult for the student, who usually works in school out of his/her ZPD.

To summarize, in school, the opportunities to learn exist but the appropriate mediation and modeling for learners working through their second language are minimal (other than in truly bilingual classrooms), and have not found their way consistently into the special education system that serves mostly Hispanic students with profiles such as the ones in this study.

Home Support: Literacy at Home

These students live within two communities: a micro- and a macro-community. Their micro-community is ethnically and linguistically distinguishable, rich in traditions with values which celebrate the family, humaneness, and the ability of children to indicate when they are ready to learn (Wong-Fillmore, 1991). Each child is guided by adults or older siblings through the early years, and thereafter is expected to indicate, specially during the school years, when and how s/he needs assistance. It is the child/student who controls how and when learning tasks related to academics are to be done: The child decides when to do the homework, how to do it, or even if she/he wants to do it. Delgado-Gaitan (1990) found a somewhat similar pattern in some of the families she studied. As an aside, the reader is reminded that not every Latino family is like this, but within those involved in the scope of this project, it was the child who set the pace.

This group of parents want their children to learn, but it is the child's responsibility to indicate readiness to learn, to seek assistance when needed, to direct his/her learning process, and to recognize and take advantage of the appropriate learning opportunities. In other words, in

this child-centered model, the child suggests to the parent readiness to learn or level at which s/he feels comfortable in participating in the learning experience and the type of experience she/he considers necessary: The child, not the adult guides the learning. This is in consonance with another study by Maldonado-Colón (1992) with a non-disabled population of Latino children and parents in which the children asked the parents to be taken to the library in search of learning mediators and resources.

Both English and Spanish were used in the homes to communicate. Just as English and/or Spanish were used for verbal communication, so were they present in printed form to illustrate other forms of information exchanges in one or both languages. Yet, an absence of focused mediation at the child's zone of proximal development (ZPD)²⁰, inconsistent language mediation related to activities²¹ in which the child was involved, and the existence of a diglossic environment (English for school-related discussions, and Spanish for socio-familial exchanges) appear to the researcher to limit the effectiveness of the learning opportunities provided at the home. The efforts of the parents while noteworthy were not sufficient to address the needs and challenges of these learners.

According to Vygotsky (1978) advanced knowledge develops as the mediator, or more knowledgeable person helps the participant advance and resolve a problem or challenge. The children in this study did have access at home to people who were speakers of some level of Spanish and/or English, who were readers and writers at an estimated level, and

²⁰ Several mothers indicated buying books with little words, short text and large illustrations in spite of the request the child had made for a more advanced book: "If he cannot read it, he cannot have it" was the sentiment expressed by several mothers when asked what kinds of books they bought for the student.

²¹ E.g., shopping, playing, helping, watching television...

who were familiar with the school expectations and experiences related to language and literacy development; but, the question remains unanswered as to how knowledgeable they were to negotiate meaning and strategies for these learners who were having difficulties developing competence in school. It was apparent from conversations in the interviews that parents were not making a distinction between skills needed to carry on social conversations and elementary translation and those needed to learn to read, to navigate through contextualized and decontextualized language and instruction. In this case, crucial mediation probably was not provided as needed. Some of the children sought peers as mediators as they encountered new words and needed new ways to express their thoughts; unfortunately, it seemed not to be enough to help them advance to higher levels.

Homework was another area around which language and literacy development happened in the home. Within this environment the knowledgeable mediators were older siblings, or younger relatives (e.g., cousins and aunts) that were in school with the students. This excellent opportunity of exposure to decontextualized language was nevertheless tainted by the pressures imposed on the older siblings or relatives to stop what they were doing, usually their own homework, to help the younger one to figure out what to do since consultation with the parent had not been fruitful. The nature of the opportunity thus changed from one of potentially learning at the ZPD to one of being told just what to do (the answer). Delgado-Gaitan found a similar condition among the low achievers (novice readers) in her study. When these conditions exist, the quality of the mediation and the learning experiences are critical, yet there were very small modifications made in school to compensate for the condition existing at home. Home support was the best available, but not

necessarily the one needed to succeed in school, consequently suggesting that the instructional/learning model needs to be modified. Efforts must include building social capital (Allington, 1994; Coleman, 1987).

Macro and Micro- Community Participation.

Membership in macro- and micro-communities provides broader opportunities for language and literacy development. The participants in this study were members of a micro-community characterized by a preponderance of Spanish language usage quite frequently combined with English, mostly at the non-academic contextualized levels, and a high proportion of non-academically oriented leisure activities. They were also members of a macro-English speaking community which expected learners to dedicate their efforts to the mastery of English language and to participate in academically-oriented activities. Most parents who know what school expects direct the focus of their early childrearing practices to prepare children for school. Parents in this study like the group of parents of novice readers in Delgado-Gaitan's (1990) study, did not read much to their children, nor interacted in a manner that promoted language and literacy at home or in activities within the community until made aware of it through participation in the project. In addition to this limited support, parents and children did not capitalize on opportunities available in the community to enhance academic learning.

To increase the opportunities for preparation and/or support, schools as well as community agencies offer programs aimed at reducing learning gaps: After school sessions with teachers and tutors were available. Community programs fostering cooperative learning and group sharing and/or developing artistic capabilities also were available. Afterschool programs in which students were given time to complete their homework under the guidance of tutors were additional options available

to most participants in this study; yet, neither children nor parents had great interest in them. It was up to the child to decide on participation, and if as in one case, it was too far away from the home, the opportunity was declined without consideration to the needs of the child. Program restructuring as well as more active recruitment and parent education are necessary since parents felt that these underachievers were overwhelmed with daily classroom activities and frustrating homework tasks, a perception that undermined the pressure to do academically-oriented tasks at home. Further, there was little correlation between time and effort spent on homework and subsequent results.

While additional opportunities to learn exist within the community like shopping, visiting friends, participating in trips to parks, restaurants and other places within the macro-community possible benefits of social interaction within them remained a potential. Visits to places within the community such as laundromats, restaurants, markets, bakeries and stores revealed a high percentage (90%) of adult to adult information exchanges and very little experience-related context-embedded conversations directed to children. Most of the language used to address children was in the form of directives. This type of interaction has been documented extensively in earlier early childhood literature (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Feagan & Farran, 1982). It is unfortunate that such patterns prevail when research suggests that the rate of child language development is definitely influenced by the conversations to which the child is exposed and in which s/he participates. Thus, the need exists to increase parental awareness of the richness of opportunities and of strategies that enhance language and literacy development while participating in any community activity.

Overall, findings of this study suggest that a combination of factors led to a condition which circumscribed the development of advanced language, cognitive and literacy skills for these students. Factors related to the limited understanding of the needs of second language learners in schools, limitations within the home environment combined with limited access to opportunities within the community which promote literacy development, position the instruction and learning opportunities offered to these students, with or without disabilities, in areas other than their zone of proximal development: a possible explanation as to why teachers and parents' efforts were not making a significant difference.

Specifically, unavailability of mediators, instructional programs structurally rigid, inability of the child/student to articulate a need because of lack of experiences, or language/ communication limitations and/or the presence of a disability position these children in circles of increasing disempowerment. Being out of the zone is being deprived of the optimal learning opportunity to advance your levels of understanding and competence. Being out of the zone disempowers. Unless agencies and administrators within programs address the needs of students learning through a second language through a more conscientious effort, more profiles like the ones in this study will emerge, multiplying the numbers of disempowered students and increasing the probability of greater drop out rates in the higher grades.

Conclusions

The function of this study is to raise issues and share information. Whether the 16 students studied were, or not, learning disabled is not within the focus of this study. What is of concern is the fact that to distinguish limitations imposed by the environment from limitations due to a disability, several critical aspects of these students' lives were not

given more than cursory attention. When research has identified such factors as sociocultural diversity (Allington, 1994; Collier & Hoover, 1987), underdeveloped language plus limited access to the content of the curriculum (Cummins, 1985; Steinberg, Blinde & Chan, 1984; Wells, 1986), and limited access to learning partnerships (Coleman, 1987), as powerful factors impacting on students' progress in school, particularly in the areas of language and literacy development, alternatives within mainstream have to be fully explored before labeling students. The learning environment²² must be studied; otherwise, specialists searching for a disability could be misled in their interpretation of the findings: How can they tell, conscientiously, without careful study of home and of current as well as previous delivery of instruction, if the origin of the problem is rooted in a disability or on limited pre-academic background and poor opportunities to develop and learn? Embarking on such comprehensive analysis could facilitate the identification of strategies to increase both achievement and learning rate.

Certain generalizations emerge from the material studied and summarized throughout the report:

All children began school anxious to learn but found the experience overwhelming as instruction became meaningless, given the high probability that they were not receiving comprehensible input. Teachers assumed that skills for BICS and CALP were the same, and that if children developed BICS, development of CALP would automatically follow by virtue of immersion in it. Noticing limited progress and inability to sustain gains, they suspected disability.

²² Includes: classroom physical and emotional environment, methodologies to promote the development of language reading and writing, network of learners to support those requiring additional assistance, materials used for instruction, tasks assigned at school and for home.

Parents were not aware of the demands the curriculum made on their children, nor of the level of linguistic skills necessary to succeed in school; thus, support for the children at home and community was limited.

Homework, just like much classwork, seemed to be out of the zone of proximal development for these learners and their parents.

The support the children/students received at home and at school was not enough to reduce the gaps in their learning.

Instructional interventions within special education (RSP) were too restrictive to promote greater change given the characteristics and needs of these learners.

For many of the students in this study, the expansion of learning possibilities remained an unfulfilled promise extended to the special education placement. The highly structured program instituted in remediation resulted from an original perception that under achievement results from either lack of ability or a disability. Unfortunately, the lives of these students seems to corroborate a pattern identified by Allington (1994):

children who lack experiences with text before school perform poorly... once in school, children who read little are the children least likely to read well and most likely to be described in terms that suggest limited capacity for learning... Such children typically experience lessons designed in ways that restrict how much reading they do in school... [Yet,] it remains unlikely that we will hear much discussion of the lack of reading experiences as the source of difficulties. Professional discussions about a 12-year-old child who is still experiencing substantial difficulty reading independently will commonly involve talk of potential neurologically based learning

disabilities and only rarely talk of the evident lack of experience with reading [and in this study, also with knowledgeable language mediators].

The design of instructional interventions for limited-experience children has similarly failed to emphasize expanding substantially their opportunities to read, write, and listen to stories. Rather than creating interventions that immerse low experience children in print and texts, remedial, compensatory, and special education interventions focus more often on providing participating children with more skills lessons [and practices] (p. 16).

Related to language and literacy development, Wells (1986) has stated that children's familiarity with stories not only helps their linguistic and cognitive skills, but also promotes insights which later on enable children to construct stories in their mind. Most of the children in this study, with two exceptions, were not read at home consistently nor were engaged in discussions around stories. The two who did have parents who read to them were exposed to literature for three- and four-year-olds even though they were much older.

Thus, as long as professionals insist on not including in depth classroom and home study as part of the evaluation process, second language learners from low socio-economic backgrounds have a high probability of limited access to the content and learning opportunities to which they are entitled, their rate of improvement would continue to be limited.

Recommendations

This project documents patterns of language and literacy development among 16 students of Mexican descent identified as learning disabled by state and local guidelines. Data information related to language and literacy development in school, at home and in community-related activities, in addition to instruction and academic achievement. Triangulation enabled the visualization of each and all students' condition from multiple perspectives. It is by no means the intent of this report to claim that the small number of students studied are representative of the large student body in this state, or in the nation, but their data together with that of previous studies by Allington (1994), Cummins (1980,1984), Delgado-Gaitan (1990), Ortiz and her colleagues at The University of Texas (1989), Shepard and Smith in Colorado (1981), Cegelka and her colleagues in California (1987), and others across this nation, suggest a series of recommendations for policy, practice and research.

Recommendations for Policymakers

The policy maker can have a great impact on facilitating and promoting the understanding and enhancement of language and literacy development among second language learners. Thus, it is recommended that the following be considered in drafting or modifying policy which impacts on the lives and education of culturally and/or linguistically diverse second language learners.

1. **Early identification.** Policies for early identification of second language learners with limited models and experiences, with or without developmental disabilities should be promoted. Participation in appropriately designed early intervention programs can enhance the levels of language proficiency of the youngsters whether they have or not a learning disability.

2. **Identification of language use within the home.** Policies should require more than the use of instruments such as the Home Language Survey (HLS) as a reference for instructional and/or evaluation decisions in cases when the child or student is performing at a lower level than what would be considered age appropriate for children/students with similar conditions who are also second language learners. Home language usage should be understood in its multiple dimensions.
3. **Language development component for parents.** Policies requiring parent participation, specially in programs aimed at children and families of low socio-economic levels, should also provide, or focus on developing the linguistic competence of parents in their first language and/or English. All early childhood funded programs should have a language development component for parents which should include training on conditions that facilitate optimal language and eventual literacy development and on the distinctions between BICS and CALP for academic success.
4. **Teacher certification.** Given current increases in diversity across the schools in this nation, policies for teacher preparation and certification should require that all teachers in USA schools develop an in-depth understanding of the process of second language acquisition, characteristics of second language learners and children with limited pre-academic experiential background, also, how they as teachers can enhance the opportunities of these learners to develop higher levels of language proficiency. Equally important, teacher training programs should assist teachers become experts in the use of children's literature to promote

language and literacy development among children with very limited experiences in pre-school literacy. Resources should be directed to support this effort.

5. **Evaluator certification.** Policies requiring preparation and certification of evaluation personnel should mandate extensive training in understanding conditions and effects of growing up in environments with socioeconomic limitations, second language acquisition and its effects, characteristics of the productions and responses of second language learners during instruction and in evaluation sessions, and exploration of alternative procedures for assessment.
6. **Conditions for funding community-based early intervention programs.** Funding for community-based programs should require the inclusion and active participation of language development specialists in programs serving children and/or families. Knowledge about second language acquisition and the support required to promote it should be a requirement for these specialists: Support has to be shared by areas other than schools and homes.
7. **Site-based training.** Local school policies should require all personnel on the school site (e.g., secretaries, maintenance, nurses, evaluators, teachers, and others) to participate on personnel development sessions in which issues and practices related to language acquisition among first and/or second language learners are discussed, and suggestions to promote respect for cultural diversity and to facilitate language development are shared. All personnel within a school site have the potential of becoming

social capital for students with language delays and limited language and literacy models. Understanding, knowledge and high expectations can do wonders to promote learning as the effective schools literature has demonstrated consistently.

Recommendations for Practitioners

Recommendations for Teachers

1. **Understanding of contextualized and context-reduced language requirements and their effects.** Teachers should develop a thorough understanding of the differences and requirements of contextualized and context-reduced language in academic settings, and their effects on the academic performance of second language learners with and without learning disabilities and language delays who come from environments limited in knowledge of information and skills related to academics, in order to develop and provide effective learning opportunities.
2. **Instructional strategies.** All teachers should become familiar with strategies that enhance learning opportunities for second language learners, and facilitate the development of advanced language skills. Of particular importance is the development of an integrated rather than a reductionist approach to the instruction of these learners, and instructional planning which relies considerably on the use of children's literature and thematic instruction to improve low rates of participation, learning and accomplishment. It also permits the re-introduction of topics and ideas as well as the recycling of language spiraling into upper levels. Ruiz (1989) is testing an integrated approach concretized in her Optimal Learning Environment (OLE) model. Ortiz and her colleagues (1991) at The University of Texas at Austin have also tried such an approach with

students with mild disabilities.

3. **An optimal language and literacy learning environment.** Educators should strive to promote within their environments the conditions which support the development of contextualized and context-reduced language learning and literacy skills. Shifting the emphasis of these two aspects as proficiency develops will help learners gain competence. Attention must be given to working within the zone of proximal development (ZPD) in relation to problems or challenges that enthuse the learner.
4. **Understand the impact of under- and overestimation of language proficiency and pre-academic experiences on the learner's performance in school.** Once the learner can speak some English, his/her apparent abilities mislead teachers who develop patterns of overestimation of the learner's language competence. Underestimating the importance of pre-academic experiences in facilitating learning as it is structured in the regular classroom might lead to underestimation of the learners' abilities too. Teachers should strive to understand the peril of overestimation and its impact on the learner's academic performance and learning opportunities. Underestimation of competence in the native language also impacts learning opportunities and the quality of instruction offered in the second language. (See Moll, 1981).

Recommendations for Evaluators

1. **Stronger language focus in preparation.** Evaluators should seek to enhance their preparation by studying the impact and effects of dual language learning, its use and instruction if they are to work

with second language learners, regardless of their (the evaluator's) linguistic abilities as monolingual or bilingual.

2. **Recognition of contextualized and context-reduced language.** Evaluators should become competent in distinguishing forms of contextualized and context-reduced language in their procedures and tools, and the effects they might have on the interpretation of academic performance, psychological and ability testing and results.
3. **Alternative forms of assessment.** Evaluators should learn and incorporate alternative forms of assessment which focus on discovering the second language learner's strengths, and yield more reliable input for instructional modifications and program enhancement. Efforts to identify the learner's zone of proximal development in language and literacy must increase in order to develop meaningful IEP's for these students.
4. **Awareness of effects of over and underestimation.** Evaluators should learn how to overcome the practice of overestimation of English language proficiency and underestimation of primary language competence among second language learners. Also, they should be able to recognize and interpret the effects of over and underestimation of linguistic abilities in academic performance.

Recommendations for Parents

1. **Learning about language levels.** Parents should seek assistance in learning about the language levels necessary to promote academic success and on how to assist in their development.
2. **Learning about literacy development.** Parents should expand

their knowledge about practices that facilitate the acquisition of skills and abilities which support the emergence of early literacy and its later advanced development.

3. **Increase or develop social capital.** Parents should model, or seek models within their ethnolinguistic community which can promote language and literacy development for their children. Every home should have a stock of social capital for the children to access.
5. **Recognize the zone of proximal development.** Learning to recognize when the child is ready to benefit from advanced forms of language, reading and writing is an ability that operates in some parents and is underdeveloped in others. Parents should strive to increase their understanding, be sensitive to and able to facilitate their child's movement through his/her zones of proximal development.

Recommendations for Administrators

1. **Promote effective language learning environments.** Administrators should make a concerted effort to facilitate early language and literacy development across the school through the creation and support of enhancement programs that assist parents and all school personnel in becoming more effective language and literacy advocates and facilitators.
2. **Promote access to social capital.** Administrators should work with social agencies to identify and recruit human capital (other than teachers and teacher aides) that can assist with and promote the development of language and literacy skills, and model literacy practices within the learner's zone of proximal development.
3. **Promote understanding of second language acquisition among support personnel.** Administrators should facilitate and encourage

the education of members of the local Teacher Assistance and/or Student Study Teams on issues and practices which impact language and literacy development among children with limited school-related experiential backgrounds, and second language learners.

Recommendations for Researchers

The work of researchers in combination with specialists (e.g., resource teachers, bilingual teachers, language development teachers and psychologists) can guide effectively in the preparation of case studies which facilitate understanding and enhance practice involving children of low socioeconomic level who are second language learners. Within the field of special education much needs to be done toward developing a greater understanding of the needs of second language learners at different socioeconomic levels and from different ethnolinguistic groups. In that vein the following recommendations are made:

1. Study characteristics of effective language and literacy mediators for second language learners with and without learning disabilities.
2. Study characteristics of effective language learning environments for second language learners with learning disabilities.
3. Continue to study second language learners with learning disabilities in order to improve the pool of information available to decision-makers.
4. Assist parents and teachers in the study of strategies for the identification of the zone of proximal development among second language learners with learning disabilities, and the instructional practices to be used to facilitate the advancement of learning.
5. Develop models of assisted instruction carried on among ethnolinguistic communities other than the mainstream culture.

6. Increase data available on the effects of parent training on language and literacy development through a holistic perspective, particularly in cases of parents of underachievers..

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Appendices

Appendix A

Home Language and Literacy Environment Survey (Child's Questions)

(Chang and Maldonado-Colón, 1992)

Child (C1). Literacy Activities: Before/After School

1. Who do you live with?
2. After you come home from school, what do you do?
Focus: What kind of activities do you do?
What language do you use? With Whom?
Do you go to any "after school program"?
What type of program? _____ Why do you attend?
3. What kind of homework do you usually have?
Focus: Tasks by subject matter. Give examples.
Do you use "home language" to solve homework problems? ____ When?
(For example, problem solving in math may be mediated through their first language)
4. Do you ask your friends to help with homework?
Focus: Who helps you with it? In what language?
How long does it take you to do it?
What types of tasks(s) do you usually have?
Do you have problems doing homework?
When you cannot do it, what do you do?
5. Is doing homework important to you? ____ Why? Why not?
6. In your view, do many of your friends think school or homework is important?
Do they always complete their assignments or homework? _____ Why or Why not?
7. Where do you usually do your homework?
Focus: Living space at home.
8. Which of your family members help you with homework?
Does that person enjoy helping you? Why?

9. What kinds of reading materials are in your home?

- Magazines/revistas
- TV guides/guía de t.v.
- Comics/cómicas
- Newspapers/periódicos/noticiario/diario
- Ads/anuncios/promociones/especiales
- Bulletins/Pamphlets/boletines, panfletos
- Religious books/libros de religión
- Libros de cuentos
- Libros para adultos (de cocina, para aprender, novelas)
- Other/otros:

Focus: In what language?
Whose are they?
Who uses them?

Focus on:

- ¿En qué lenguaje?
- ¿Quién los lee?
- ¿Con cuánta frecuencia?
- ¿Los comparten con su hijo(a)?
¿Cómo?
- ¿Qué lenguaje usa para ello?
- ¿Con qué frecuencia?

10. Before you go to school in the mornings what do you do?

C2: Literacy Activities: Entertainment

1. What do you do, during your free time, after you finish your homework?

Option: What do you do during your free time at home?

Focus: What kind of activities do you do?
What language do you use?
Who do you do them with?

2. Do you read anything for fun? [If no, ask: What about comics, baseball cards, horror stories?]

Do you read with your parents or brothers and sisters for fun?

Focus: Do you have anything that you like to read? What do you read?

3. What do you do on weekends?

Focus: What kind of activities do you do? What language do you use?
Who do you do them with?

C3: Literacy Activities: Shopping

1. How often do you go shopping with your family?
 What kinds of shops do you visit? Do you shop for your parents sometimes?
 Focus: What kind of things do you talk about?
 In what language?
 Who do you talk with?
 Have you ever made a shopping list? ____ Why or why not?
 When do you go shopping?
2. Do you go to bookstores or newstands? ____ Why or why not?
 Do you buy anything? ____ What kind of materials do you buy?
3. Do you read the products' labels? ____ Sales ads? ____
 What kinds of information do you read about?
4. Who talks to the sales clerk? _____ Cashiers? _____
 Can you make change? _____ Can you name the coins? _____

C4 Literacy Activities: Holidays

1. Which is the holiday you enjoy the most? _____ Why?
 Focus: What kind of activities do you do?
 What language do you use?
2. How do you know about the holidays?
 Focus: Who told you about them?
 How/what do your parents teach you about holidays and traditions?
 Do they read anything to you about the holidays or traditions?
 If not, do they talk about them?

C5 Literacy Activities: Chores/Daily Survival Skills:

1. Do you do any chores/paid jobs after school or at home? (e.g., paper route)
Option: If you don't, then do your brothers or sisters do any chores? (check the rank of the child and the size of the family.)
Focus: What kind of activities? What language do you use when you do them?
With whom do you do them?

C6 Literacy Activities: Eating

1. How often do you eat with your whole family?
Focus: What kind of things do you discuss while you are at the dinner table?
Who do you discuss them with?
What language do you use?
Do you talk about school during family meals?
What do you talk about?
2. How often do you go out to eat with your family?
Focus: Types of restaurants attended.
Do you have to translate the menu for your family?
3. Do you know how to cook? _____ Who taught you? _____
Focus: Do you use a cookbook?
Do you use recipes from products? (e.g., labels)
If you had to teach a favorite recipe to a friend, how would you teach your friend?
4. Do you cut recipes from magazines or newspapers?
Focus: Who finds them?
Who reads them?
Who uses them?
In what language are they?

C7 Literacy Activities: Use of Home and English Languages

1. Which language do you prefer to use?
Spanish or English? _____ Why ?
Focus: What kind of activities are associated with each language?
When is each language used? Which one is easier for them?
How do they feel about using each of the languages?
(Try to identify their self-concept and motivation related to
using each of the languages)
2. When do you use Spanish language? Give me examples.
3. How would you describe your knowledge of English and Spanish?

[This is a self-evaluation of proficiency for BICS]

- a. can use ___ English / ___ Spanish for basic greetings, such as good morning. How are you?
- b. can use ___ English / ___ Spanish names for some common objects
- c. can speak ___ English / ___ Spanish in conversation somewhat fluent
- d. can speak ___ English / ___ Spanish fluently

[This is a self-evaluation of proficiency for CALP]

- a. can read and write in ___ English, ___ Spanish to:
___ do all my homework without asking questions
___ pass a school test
___ do my mathematics word problems
___ answer the questions that are at the end of the stories you read in class
- b. never have difficulties reading and writing in ___ English, ___ Spanish
- c. English is difficult when...
- d. Spanish is difficult when ...

C8 Literacy Activities: Peer Network

A. Classroom:

1. Do you have many friends at school?
2. Do you work in groups at school?
Which reading and writing activities do you like the best when you do them in groups?
Focus: What language do you speak with your friends in school?
Do they help you learn English?
Do they help you with homework?
What kind of activities do you usually do with them that involve reading and writing?
3. What kinds of things do you do together with your friends at school?
Focus: Which language do you use?
What kinds of activities do you do?

B. Neighborhood

1. Do you have a lot of friends in your neighborhood?
Focus: What language do you speak with your friends of the neighborhood?
Do they help you learn English?
Do they help you with homework?
What kinds of activities do you usually do with them that involve reading or writing?
2. How often do you see your friends?
3. Do you do things with them in which you have to read? Or write?
Give examples, please.
4. Which language do you prefer to use with them? _____ Why?

C9 Literacy Activities: Family/School Relationships

1. Who comes to school for meetings?
2. In your view, do your parents like to come to school and talk with your teachers or principals? Why?
3. What do you do with your tests and papers that you get A's or stars?
 Focus: Do you have them displayed at home? Where?
 Option: Do you have your school work displayed in your home? What kind? _____

 Do you like to draw? What do you like to draw?
 Do you have your drawings displayed at home?
 What do they represent? _____
 (e.g., science drawings, social studies, art, etc.)
 or What gives you the ideas to do these drawings?
4. Do you talk to your parents about what you would like to do or to be once you have graduated from school? ____ In what language? _____
5. What do you want to be? Why?
6. Would you talk to your parents about the problems or troubles you might have in ____ school? ____ With your friends? Or _____?
 In what language? _____
7. In what ways, can your teachers (RSP or homeroom) help you better with your school work?
 Options: How do you think they could help you more so you are successful
 all of the time in your classes?, or
 If you were having difficulties with reading or with mathematics, what
 things could your teacher do to help you?

8. When you learn something new or exciting at school, who do you share it
with? _____ Why? What language do you use?

Revised by EMC 10/30/92

Appendix B

Home Language and Literacy Environment Survey
Ji-Mei Chang & Elba Maldonado-Colón (1992)

(Revised to conform with Hispanic perspective, 10/5/92 EMC)

Parents/Guardians (PG)1.

Literacy Activities: Before/After School

Padres/Guardianes (PG)1.

Actividades de Lecto-escritura: Antes y después de la escuela

1. What does your child do after s/he comes home from school until s/he goes to bed?
¿Qué hace su hijo(a) después de la escuela cuando llega a la casa?

Follow up: Does s/he go to any "after school program?"

Is this helpful? How?

Seguimiento: ¿Asiste a algún programa después de la escuela?

¿Le ayuda esto? ¿Cómo?

2. Do you help your child with his/her homework?
¿Ayuda usted a su hijo(a) con sus tareas de la escuela/asignaciones?

Follow up: How do you help him/her?

Which language do you use when you help him/her?

Seguimiento: ¿Cómo lo(a) ayuda usted?

¿Qué lenguaje usa cuando lo(a) ayuda?

3. How do you feel about homework assigned by teachers?
¿Qué piensa usted de las tareas que los maestros le asignan a su hijo(a)?

Focus/ Enfoque:

- a. quantity-- cantidad
- b. purpose of homework -- propósito de la tarea
- c. level of parental involvement--
nivel de participación de los padres
- d. amount of reading and writing--
cantidad de lectura y escritura

4. If your child has problems with his or her homework, who helps him or her?
Si su hijo(a) tiene problemas con la tarea que le asignan, ¿quién le ayuda?

5. What does your child do before s/he goes to school?
¿Qué hace su hijo(a) antes de irse a la escuela?

6. Do you take your child to the public library for his/her homework assignments?
¿Lleva usted a su hijo(a) a la biblioteca pública cuando le dan tarea/asignación?

7. Do you buy or borrow any school supplementary materials
(e.g., reading, math or other workbooks) for your child?
¿Le compra usted, o toma prestados, materiales suplementarios que le
ayuden en la escuela (e.g.-- lectura, matemáticas, libros de trabajo)

Focus/Enfoque: Do you know where to find them? ¿Sabe dónde encontrarlos?
Who might be able to help you find/buy them?
¿Quién puede ayudarlo(a) a encontrarlos?
What do you buy? Why? ¿Qué compra? ¿Por qué?
Is it important to have these materials for your child? Why or why not?
¿Es importante tener estos materiales para su hijo(a)? ¿Por qué?

8. Do you have any printed material at home that your child can use
before or after school? For example (See list below):
¿Tiene materiales de lectura en el hogar que pueda usar su hijo(a)
antes y después de la escuela? Como por ejemplo (Ver lista) :

----- Magazines/revistas
----- TV guides/guía de t.v.
----- Comics/cómicas
----- Newspapers/periódicos/noticiero/diario
----- Ads/anuncios/promociones/especiales
----- Bulletins/Pamphlets/boletines, panfletos
----- Religious books/libros de religión
----- Libros de cuentos
----- Libros para adultos (de cocina, para aprender, novelas)
----- Other/otros:

Focus: In what language?
¿En qué idioma?

Focus on:
¿En qué lenguaje?
¿Quién los lee?
¿Con cuanta frecuencia?
¿Los comparten con su hijo(a)?
¿Cómo?
¿Qué lenguaje usa para ello?
¿Con qué frecuencia?

9. What types of "after school programs" are available in your
neighborhood (or community)? Does your child attend any?
¿Qué clase de programas hay en su vecindad (o en la comunidad)
para los niños después de la escuela? ¿Asiste su hijo(a) a alguno?

Focus/Enfoque: Are they helpful? In what way?
¿Ayudan? ¿Cómo?
Do they help develop reading and writing skills?
¿Ayudan a desarrollar las habilidades de lectura y escritura?
What language would they be speaking?
¿Cuál de los lenguajes usan?

PG2: Literacy Activities: Entertainment
Actividades de Lecto-escritura: Entretenimiento

Focus/Enfoque: What language do you use? El lenguaje que se usa.
Do you use printed materials? Uso de material impreso.
What kind of reading materials do you use?
Clase de materiales que usan.
If you watch TV together,
what types of program do you watch?
Si ven televisión, ¿qué clase de programas ven?
Do you discuss the TV program with your child?
Discusión del programa de t.v. con el hijo(a)

1. What activities do you do with your children on weekends?
¿Qué actividades hace con su hijo(a) los fines de semana?
[If nothing, ask:] What do the children do those times and days?
[Si la respuesta es negativa, pregunte:] ¿Qué hace su hijo(a) esos días?
(e.g.: If you watch t.v. together, what types of programs do you watch? Do you discuss t.v. programs with your child? What language do you use to do this?)
(p.e.: Si ustedes ven t.v. juntos, ¿qué tipos de programas ven? ¿Discute sobre lo que vieron?
¿Cuál lenguaje usa para discutir el programa?)
2. What kinds of fun activities does your child like to do?
¿Qué hace su hijo(a) para divertirse?
3. How do you usually encourage your child to read or write for enjoyment/fun?
¿Cómo estimula a su hijo(a) a leer y a escribir para divertirse?

PG3 Literacy Activities: Shopping
Actividades de Lecto-escritura: Compras

1. Do you take your child with you when you go shopping?
¿Lleva usted a su hijo(a) cuando va de compras?
Focus/Enfoque: What language do you use? ¿Qué lenguaje usan?
Who talks to the clerk? ¿Quién sirve de intermediario con los vendedores?
Do you or your child make a shopping list? ¿Hacen una lista para las compras?
What language do you use? ¿Qué lenguaje usan?
2. When you go shopping with your child, who reads signs in the stores? the sales ads?
Cuando va de compras con su hijo(a), ¿quién lee las cubiertas de los productos y los anuncios de ventas?
What language do you use? ¿Qué lenguaje usan?

3. Do you take your child to bookstores or newspaper/magazine stands?
Why? or Why not? What do you buy there? In English or Spanish?
¿Lleva usted a su hijo(a) a la librería, o a las tiendas de periódicos/revistas?
¿Por qué? ¿Qué compran ahí? ¿En inglés o español?

PG4 Literacy Activities: Holidays/Traditions
Actividades de Lecto-escritura: Celebraciones/Tradiciones

Focus/Enfoque: Language used
Types of activities Transmission of information

1. Which holidays do you celebrate at home and with your family?
¿Qué días feriados celebran/festejan?
- When do, do you prepare a big meal for your family?
Cuando celebran, ¿prepara usted una comida especial para la familia?
2. What kind of activities do you do to celebrate?
¿Qué clase de actividades hacen para celebrar?
3. What language is used during the activities?
¿Qué lenguaje se usa durante las actividades?
4. What do you teach your child about holidays and traditions?
¿Qué le enseña a su hijo(a) sobre los días feriados y las tradiciones?
Focus: How do you teach your child about these?
Enfoque: ¿Cómo le enseña sobre las celebraciones y tradiciones?
5. Do you read anything to your child about the Holidays/traditions?
¿Lee algo a su hijo(a) sobre los días feriados y las tradiciones?
(e.g.-- cuentos, artículos del noticiero sobre la Llorona, los espantos, etc.)
6. Who do you usually invite for these occasions?
¿A quién, o quienes, invita para compartir en las celebraciones?

7. How do you teach your children about traditions of the Hispanic and American cultures?
¿Cómo le enseña a su hijo(a) sobre las tradiciones de las culturas hispana y estadounidense?

Focus/Enfoque: What do you teach them about? ¿Qué le enseña?
How do you do it? ¿Cómo lo hace?
If you do not do it, from whom do they learn them?
Si usted no lo hace, ¿de quién las aprenden?

PG5 Literacy Activities: Chores/Daily Survival Skills:
Actividades de Lecto-escritura: Tareas del hogar/destrezas de supervivencia

1. What kind of chores/tasks do you usually ask your child to do at home?
¿Cómo le ayuda su hijo(a) en el hogar?

Focus/Enfoque: What types of activities? Clases de actividades.
What language is used for directions? ¿Qué lenguaje se usa para dar las instrucciones?

PG6 Literacy Activities: Eating
Actividades de Lecto-escritura: Comidas

1. When you are together for meals, what do you talk about?
Cuando se reúnen para las comidas, ¿de qué hablan/conversan?
- Focus/Enfoque: What language do you use? Lenguaje usado.
What does he/she talk about? ¿Sobre qué cosas cuenta?

PG7 Literacy Activities: Use of Home and English Languages
Actividades de Lecto-escritura: Uso del español y del inglés

Focus/Enfoque:

What kind of activities are associated with each language?

Lenguaje de las actividades.

Which one is easier for them? Preferencia lingüística

How do they feel about using each of the languages?

(Try to identify their self-concept and motivation related to using each of the languages..)

(Trate de identificar auto-estima y motivación relacionada con el uso de cada lenguaje.)

1. Which language does your child **prefer** to use? Cantonese____/Spanish____/English____/other language____?
 ¿Cuál lenguaje prefiere usar su hijo(a)?

Which language was used with your child during his/her first three years after birth? _____

¿Cuál idioma usaron con su hijo(a) durante sus primeros tres años de vida? _____

If not English, when did you begin to use English? _____ Why?

Si no fue inglés, ¿cuando comenzaron a usar el inglés? _____ ¿ Por qué?

When does s/he use Cantonese/Spanish/other language?

¿Cuándo usa el español?

When does s/he use English?

¿Cuándo usa el inglés?

2. In your view, what will be the best way for your child to learn English and/or Chinese/Spanish?

Desde su perspectiva,

¿cuál sería la mejor forma para que su hijo(a) aprenda español?

¿cuál sería la mejor forma para que su hijo(a) aprenda inglés?

3. Are you taking any adult education classes? Y__ N__

¿Está tomando clases para adultos? _____

Where? _____ What kind _____?

¿Dónde? _____ ¿Qué clase?

4. There are many ways to describe one's knowledge of a language.
Hay muchas maneras de describir el conocimiento que uno tiene
de un lenguaje/idioma.

What would you say about your knowledge of Cantonese/Spanish?
¿Qué diría usted de su conocimiento del español?

For example: Can you read it? ____ What can you read in it?
(e.g.: __ newspapers, __ novels, __ letters, __ magazines, __ other ____)
Por ejemplo: ¿Puede leerlo? ____ ¿Qué puede usted leer usándolo?
(p.e.: __ periódicos/noticiarios, __ novelas, __ cartas, __ revistas, __ otros ____)
When does it get difficult to read? Give us an example.
¿Cuándo le resulta difícil leerlo? Deme un ejemplo.

Can you write it? ____ What can you write using it?
(e.g.: __ letters, __ notes to the teacher, __ shopping lists, __ stories)
¿Puede escribirlo? ____ ¿Qué cosas puede escribir usándolo?
(e.g.: __ cartas, __ notas para los maestros, __ listas de compra, __ cuentos)
When does it get difficult? Give us an example.
¿Cuándo le resulta difícil escribir? Deme un ejemplo.

Can you speak it? ____ ¿Puede hablarlo?
How well can you do it? ¿Qué tan bien puede hacerlo?
[Use the SOLOM matrix to classify]
When does it get difficult to speak it? ¿Cuándo le resulta difícil hablarlo? Deme un ejemplo.
Give me an example. Deme un ejemplo.
Can you understand what you listen when someone uses it?
¿Puede usted entender cuando escucha a alguien usándolo?
When does it get difficult to understand what someone says? Give us an example.
¿Cuándo resulta difícil entender lo que alguien dice? Deme un ejemplo.

[Must determine parents' proficiency in English and in Spanish]

[Must determine parents' perception of child's proficiency in English and in Spanish]

PG8 Literacy Activities: Family Social Network
Actividades de Lecto-escritura: Redes sociales de la familia

1. Who takes care of your child the majority of time?
¿Quién cuida de su hijo(a) la mayor parte del tiempo?

Focus/Enfoque: What language does she or he use with your child? ¿Qué lenguaje usan?
Are any literacy activities practiced? ¿Hacen actividades de lecto-escritura?

2. Are there grandparents in the home?
¿Viven los abuelos en su hogar?
If no, do they live nearby where the child can visit them frequently?
Si no viven en su hogar, ¿viven cerca donde su hijo(a)
pueda visitarlos frecuentemente?

3. Have the grandparents participated in childrearing?
¿Han ayudado los abuelos con la crianza de su hijo(a)?
How? ¿Cómo?
How long ago? ¿Cuánto tiempo hace?
Do they tell or stories to the child?
¿Le cuentan cuentos a su hijo(a)?
If yes, what are they about?
Si sí, ¿sobre qué?

4. How long have you and your family lived in San Jose?
¿Cuánto tiempo hace que usted y su familia viven en San Jose?

5. If you were not born here, where did you live before
coming to live in this area?
Si no nació aquí en San Jose, ¿dónde vivió antes de venir
a vivir en esta área?

Where are you from originally? ¿Dónde nació usted?

6. Do you know many people in this neighborhood or community?
¿Conoce usted muchas personas en esta vecindad/comunidad?

7. Do you have relatives here in this __neighborhood __city __community __country?
¿Tiene usted familia en: __ la vecindad, __ la ciudad, __ la comunidad, __ el país?

Focus/Enfoque: How do you communicate with them? ¿Cómo se comunica con ellos?
If through letters, who writes them? in which language?
Si a través de cartas, ¿quién las escribe? ¿En qué idioma?

8. Do you have friends who come to visit? What language do you use when they visit?
¿Tiene amistades que vienen a visitarles? ¿Cuál lenguaje usa con ellos?

Are they mostly Mexican friends? ¿Son todos mexicanos?

9. Do you encourage your child to participate in non-academic extra-curricular activities? _____ If yes, how often?
¿Estimula usted a su hijo(a) a que participe en actividades después de la escuela?

10. Is there someone else in the home that reads, or tells stories to the child?
¿Hay alguien más en el hogar que le lee, o cuenta cuentos a su hijo(a)?
Who? ¿Quién?
How often? ¿Qué tan frecuentemente?

PG9 Literacy Activities: Family/School Relationships

1. How do you feel when you attend meetings at your child's school?

¿Cómo se siente cuando asiste a las reuniones en la escuela de su hijo(a)?

Focus: How are you invited? In what language?
¿Cómo la(o) invitan? ¿Qué lenguaje usan para hacer la invitación?

Are teachers, staff, and administrators helpful to you and your child? In what ways?

¿Le ayudan a usted y a su niño(a) los maestros, ayudantes y administradores?

¿De qué manera?

Do you think they understand the problem(s) your child has? Why or Why not?

¿Cree usted que ellos entienden el problema de su hijo(a)? ¿Por qué?

Do you understand why your child needs to receive special education?

¿Comprende usted por qué su hijo(a) necesita estar en el programa de educación especial?

In your view, what can school do to make parents feel more at ease?

Desde su perspectiva, ¿qué piensa usted que pueden hacer las escuelas para que los padres se sientan más cómodos/en familia cuando visitan las escuelas?

2. Is your child's current educational program beneficial to him or her? Why?
¿Es beneficioso el programa educativo que tiene su hijo(a) ahora? ¿Por qué piensa así?

3. In your contact with teachers, what impressed you the most about them?
En sus reuniones o conversaciones con los maestros de su hijo(a), ¿qué le ha impresionado más?

4. Usually, teachers give ideas to parents about helping their children. Have teachers given you any ideas? [If yes] Which do you remember?

5. Does your child have problems with learning?
What problems?
When did you noticed this?

6. Did someone else told you that your child has problems with learning? with reading? with writing?
with language? Who told you? When?

Revised November 1992/EMC

Figure 8: Student Oral Language Observation Matrix

SOLOM PHASES: Phase I: Score 5-11 - non-English proficient; Phase II: Score 12-18 = limited English proficient;
Phase III: Score 19-24 = limited English proficient; Phase IV: Score 25+ = fully English proficient.

	1	2	3	4	5
A. Comprehension	Cannot be said to understand even simple conversation.	Has great difficulty following what is said. Can comprehend only "social conversation spoken slowly and with frequent repetitions.	Understands most of what is said at slower than normal speed with repetitions.	Understands nearly everything at normal speed, although occasional repetition may be necessary.	Understands everyday conversation and normal classroom discussions without difficulty.
B. Fluency	Speech is so halting and fragmentary as to make conversation virtually impossible.	Usually hesitant; often forced into silence by language limitations.	Speech in everyday conversation and classroom discussion frequently disrupted by the student's search for the correct manner of expression.	Speech in everyday conversation and classroom discussions generally fluent, with occasional lapses while the student searches for the correct manner of expression.	Speech in everyday conversation and classroom discussion fluent, and effortless, approximating that of a native speaker.
C. Vocabulary	Vocabulary limitations so extreme as to make conversation virtually impossible.	Misuse of words and very limited vocabulary comprehension quite difficult.	Student frequently uses the wrong words; conversation somewhat limited because of inadequate vocabulary.	Student occasionally uses inappropriate terms and/or must rephrase ideas because of lexical inadequacies.	Use of vocabulary and idioms approximate that of a native speaker.
D. Pronunciation	Pronunciation problems so severe as to make speech virtually unintelligible.	Very hard to understand because of pronunciation problems. Must frequently repeat in order to make himself or herself understood.	Pronunciation problems necessitate concentration on the part of the listener and occasionally lead to misunderstanding.	Always intelligible though one is conscious of a definite accent and occasional inappropriate intonation patterns.	Pronunciation and intonation approximate that of a native speaker.
E. Grammar	Errors in grammar and word order so severe as to make speech virtually unintelligible.	Grammar and word-order errors make comprehension difficult. Must often rephrase and/or restrict himself/herself to basic patterns.	Makes frequent errors of grammar and word-order with occasionally obscure meaning.	Occasionally makes grammatical and/or word order errors which do not obscure meaning.	Grammatical usage and word-order approximate that of a native speaker.

Based on your observation of the student, indicate with an "X" across the square in each category which best describes the student's abilities.

- The SOLOM should only be administered by persons who themselves score at level "4" or above in all categories in the language assessed.
- Students scoring at level "1" in all categories can be said to have no proficiency in the language.

Appendix C

Home Room Teacher Interview
School _____

1. What types of reading and language arts materials do you use for _____ in your classroom?
Reading program/materials(s):

Language arts program/materials(s):
2. What is this student's current performance (or strengths and weaknesses) in the following areas as observed in your classroom?
 - a. Reading:
 - b. Writing:
 - c. Language:
 - d. Math:
3. How does this student's limitations affect his/her performance in your classroom? (Please provide some examples if possible)
4. How would you describe this student's social skills?
5. In your experience working with his/her parent(s)/guardian(s), what types of information would be most helpful to you in order to communicate with him/her (them)?

6. How would you describe his/her parent(s)/guardian(s)' knowledge of English?

no answer	worse than other parents	poorer than my average parent	average/ fair	greater than my average parent	much better than other parents
0	1	2	3	4	5

Or,

no answer	cannot communicate	very limited communication needs interpreter	limited but can communicate with modifications to speech directed to him/her	communicates adequately	much better than his/her peers
0	1	2	3	4	5

11. Please use the attached chart to rate this student's level of oral English language proficiency/abilities. Please cross out the appropriate box which indicates level of ability.

USE SOLOM MATRIX Please

12. Answer those questions that are appropriate to the services you are providing to the student.

What does _____ enjoy during the reading period? (Name specific activities or strategies, please.)

What does _____ enjoy during the language period? (Name specific activities or strategies, please.)

What does _____ enjoy during the math period? (Name specific activities or strategies, please.)

13. What does _____ seem to enjoy reading? (Name the material)

At which grade/reading level is this material? _____

14. What strategies have you used with this student to help him/her succeed?

15. Have his/her literacy skills improved?
Revised 6/2/92 EMC

Resource Room Teacher Interview
(Chang and Maldonado-Colon, 1992)

1. How long have you known _____?
(Student's ID)
2. How long have you been working with this student?
3. What is the nature of this student's disabilities?
4. What type of programs do you provide for this student in your resource room?
5. What is this student's attitude when you are working with him/her in the following areas?
 - a. Reading
 - b. Writing
 - c. Language
 - d. Math
 - e. Other areas

6. What types of methods and strategies do you use with this student in the following areas?

- a. Reading
- b. Writing
- c. Language
- d. Math
- e. Other areas

7. How would you describe this student's social skills?

8. In your experience working with his or her parents/guardians, what types of information are most helpful to you in order to communicate with them?

9. What types of homework do you usually assign to this student?
Why?
10. How would you describe his/her parents/guardians' knowledge of English?
11. Please use the attached chart to rate this student's level of oral language proficiency

Appendix D

Student School Profile

1. Student No. _____ 2. Grade ____ 3. School code ____ 4. Teacher code ____

Demographics

5. Date of birth _____ 6. Age ____ 7. Place of birth _____ 8. Years in
U.S.A. ____

Language background:

9. First language spoken _____ 10. Language of the home _____
11. Stage of English language development _____

12.

Language proficiency				
Test	Date	Score	Level	Comments

13.

Communication Skills/Language issues

14. Other comments related to language:
Home Language Survey(s): Date _____ Results: _____

Academic Performance:

16. Years in school ____ 17. Years in the same school ____
18. Retention record: Grade(s)/Year(s) _____
19. Attendance record: Absences by Grade: K __, 1 __, 2 __, 3 __, 4 __, 5 __
20. Overall performance level by grade:
(Use chart on next page).
21. Was the child in a bilingual program? ____ Which grade(s): _____
22. Did the child receive ESL or ELD? Which grade(s)? _____
23. When was the transition to instruction in subject matter through English? ____
Why was the child transitioned?
24. Was child referred to S.S.T.? __ Yes __ No
Date of referral to the Student Study Team _____
25. Reason(s) for referral _____

26. Strengths noted during the SST:
- Weaknesses noted:
27. Recommendation(s) of the SST:
28. Date of referral for special education comprehensive evaluation: _____
Reason(s) for referral _____
29. Referring teacher(s): _____ Grade: _____

Evaluation Section

30. Language(s) of the evaluation: _____
31. Adjustments made to the testing procedure or to the interpretation of the results:

32. The following tests were reported for: ___ SST ___ Comprehensive Evaluation
They are the: ___ initial ___ most current evaluation available.

Test code		Language	Test date
--- (1)	Draw-A-Person	---	-----
--- (2)	Beery Developmental Test of Visual-Motor Integration	---	-----
--- (3)	Bender	---	-----
--- (4)	Verbal Opposite List	---	-----
--- (5)	Brigance (Sub-test: _____)	---	-----
--- (6)	Matrix Analogy Test (MAT)	---	-----
--- (7)	Visual Aural Digit Span	---	-----
--- (8)	Written sample	---	-----
--- (9)	One-word Pictur Vocabulary Test	---	-----
--- (10)	Woodcock-Johnson Battery	---	-----
--- (11)	WISC-R (Full battery: ___ Verbal and Performance)	---	-----
--- (12)	Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) (Form: _____)	---	-----
--- (13)	Other:		
	A. _____		-----
	B. _____		-----
	C. _____		-----
	D. _____		-----
	E. _____		-----
	F. _____		-----

Assessment Findings	

EXTRA PAGE

33.

Current Level of Performance

--	--

34.. Testing behavior comments

Initial referral--

Current evaluation--

35. Recommendation(s):

Placement, learning modalities, teaching techniques, strategies and reinforcers recommended

Initial Placement: _____

Date: _____

Current Placement: _____

Date: _____

36. Were services ever offered in the native language? _____ When? _____
How long? _____ What type? _____
If discontinued, why?

37. Did or does the student receive other supportive services? _____ What type?
Since when? _____ How long? _____

Previously

Currently

38. Has the student been reevaluated since initial placement? ____ When? _____
State changes in placement:

Reasons for changes:

39. Mainstreaming/Integration:
Percentage, Classes, Times
Previously

Current

40. **IEP Objectives:**

Date	Area	Goals and Objectives

Student	D.O. B.	Person Interviewed
School	Address	Home phone

Members of Household				
Name	Relationship	Age	Occupation	Length of Residence in U.S.

49. Speech/language development:

S	_____	W	_____
S	_____	W	_____
S	_____	W	_____

Comments on report card:

Report Card Data

Grade ____

General comment:

Mathematics achievement

____ to ____

Science achievement

____ to ____

Social studies

____ to ____

Number of grading periods ____

Language Arts

Spelling ____ to ____

Oral language ____ to ____

Written language ____ to ____

Handwriting ____ to ____

Reading ____ to ____

Text: _____

Grade level : _____

E.S.L.: _____

Bilingual program courses:

Work habits

Follows directions ____ to ____

Works independently ____ to ____

Works neatly ____ to ____

Obeys rules (class) ____ to ____

(school) ____ to ____

Homework ____ to ____

Comments on report card:

Grade ____

General comment:

Mathematics achievement

____ to ____

Science achievement

____ to ____

Social studies

____ to ____

Number of grading periods ____

Language Arts

Spelling ____ to ____

Oral language ____ to ____

Written language ____ to ____

Handwriting ____ to ____

Reading ____ to ____

Text: _____

Grade level: _____

E.S.L.: _____

Bilingual program courses:

Work habits

Follows directions ____ to ____

Works independently ____ to ____

Works neatly ____ to ____

Obeys rules (class) ____ to ____

(school) ____ to ____

Homework ____ to ____

Comments on report card: